Manufacturing History
Sex, Lies and Random House's Memoirs of Mao's Physician

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China Study Group
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The China Study Group seeks to critique mainstream perceptions and offer alternative perspectives on China. It organized the Mao Zedong Centennial commemoration in Hunter College and Columbia University in December, 1993, and panels at the Socialist Scholars Conference in 1994, 1995, and 1996. It disseminates both original works and translations to counter the biases and misinformation prevalent in mainstream discourse on China. It is not affiliated to any political or academic institution, and is counting on an expanding network of people to support and contribute to its activities.

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Introduction

In the fall of 1994, Random House published *The Private Life Of Chairman Mao*, billed as the memoirs of Dr. Li Zhisui, supposedly Mao's personal physician for 22 years and a close confidant with such unimpeded access to Mao as to enable him to know Mao's most intimate affairs.

The book purported to reveal Mao's private life, in particular his sex life. It denounced Chinese socialism under Mao as an unmitigated disaster and evil dictatorship. A Chinese edition was published simultaneously by China Times Publishing Co. of Taipei, and reportedly in more than a dozen other languages.

Media hype

The publication of the "memoirs" was accompanied by a torrent of propaganda in the establishment media in the U.S., Taiwan, and presumably other countries where the book was published. It received extensive and overwhelmingly positive front-page coverage in the Sunday edition of *The New York Times*. *U.S. News & World Report* published a special issue with extensive excerpts from it.

The New York Review of Books featured a caricature of Mao along with the title of its review, "Unmasking the Monster," at the top of its cover page - a review which outdid Li Zhisui himself in attributing Daoist thinking on sexual orgies to Mao. Other pillars of the media and intellectual establishment - *The New Yorker, Far Eastern*

Economic Review, Times Literary Supplement, Foreign Affairs, etc. - fell over each other in hailing the gospel truth of the purported memoirs.[1] It also received enthusiastic endorsements from China experts like Lucian Pye, who gushed in a blurb in the book jacket that "this work has tremendous value [and] from now on no one will be able to pretend to understand Chairman Mao's place in history without reference to this revealing account of what Mao was really like as a man." Andrew Nathan of Columbia University in his Foreword called it of "unique" value and the "most revealing book ever published on Mao, perhaps on any dictator."

Open letter

In February, 1995, Chinese intellectuals in the U.S. and Taiwan joined in an Open Letter subsequently printed in several Chinese-language publications criticizing the so-called memoirs as a

[1]Richard Bernstein, "The Tyrant Mao, as told by His Doctor," *The New York Times*, Oct. 2, 1994; "A Doctor's Tale: Mao's Physician Paints a Chilling Portrait of a Dictator and His Court," *U.S. News & World Report* (Special Report), Oct. 10, 1994; Perry Link, "Something Else," *TLS* (Times Literary Supplement), Oct. 28, 1994; Jonathan Mirsky, "Unmasking the Monster," *The New York Review of Books*, Nov. 17, 1994; John E. Wills, Jr., "The Emperor Has No Clothes: Mao's Doctor Reveals the Naked Truth," *Foreign Affairs*, Nov./Dec. 1994; Robert Elegant, "Mao the Monster," Far Eastern Economic Review, Dec. 22, 1994; Ian Buruma, "Chinese Whispers," *New Yorker*, Feb. 13, 1995.

work of disinformation.[2] It summarily analyzed the English and Chinese editions, and pointed out that the sensationalistic revelations regarding Mao's sex life, contrary to Random House's hype, were not based on information Li Zhisui was allegedly privy to because of a special relationship with Mao. The analysis uncovered egregious departures of the Chinese from the English text that could not be explained by normal translation or editorial needs. In fact, many of the allegations about Mao's sex life that so titillated the Western media are missing or presented in materially different ways in the Chinese edition.

The Open Letter also denounced the media hype, which touted this clearly biased and libelous tract as a truthful account of enormous value. In particular, it singled out Professor Andrew Nathan's Foreword as not only slanderous to Mao but as oozing with cultural imperialism's contempt for the Chinese people.

There has been an outpouring of support for the Open Letter, including essays, letters and E-mail messages from all over the world. Several articles and a book have been published in Chinese-language media exposing Li Zhisui as a liar and Random House as a channel for disinformation. In particular, many people who had personal contact with Mao have stepped forward to point out the Li Zhisui/Random House book's many fabrications.

[2]*Asian American Times*, Queens, New York, February 18, 1995; *Wen Hui Bao*, Hongkong; *Straits Review*, Taiwan.

One of the most important testimonies from people in a position to judge the veracity of the Random House/Li Zhisui "memoirs" came in mid-1995 in the form of a statement of protest signed by over 150 people from China, including Wang Dongxing, Li Yinqiao, Ye Zilong, and many others who were on Mao's staff and played parts of varying degrees of prominence in Li's book. Copies of this statement were sent from China to several overseas Chinese language journals which had previously published the Open Letter and to the contact persons listed in the Open Letter, Mr. C.H. Hua and Dr. C.Y. Tung.

The statement exposed the mendacious character of the Random House memoirs and denounced it as a collection of baseless slanders. In view of the value of this testimony and that several signatories of the statement were also well-known to overseas Chinese, Dr. Tung and Dr. Xu L. Dong, founding members of China Study Group, joined several other signatories of the Open Letter in calling a Chinese-language press conference on August 4, 1995 in New York, which was attended by practically all the New York Chinese language news organizations, including several daily newspapers and TV stations.

In addition to distributing the statement, Dr. Dong also announced the findings of his independent research work, which had been corroborated by the statement. The press conference was covered by several mainstream Chinese language dailies in the U.S., Hongkong, and Taiwan, and represented significant progress in the effort to expose the memoirs as a hoax. The controversy about the book,

its publisher, Random House, and its author, Li Zhisui, who had died a few months before, got further coverage because of the press conference.

One of Li's sons made a harried attempt to defend his father's name by attacking the statement from China as a forgery and even threatened legal action. But further statements that came from the signatories proved that Li's son was making a false statement to the press. He has since remained silent.

Subsequently, two of the most damning testimonies about the Random House/Li Zhisui memoirs have come from several former colleagues who had been described by Li Zhisui as his friends. The first one is a book published in Hongkong in November, 1995, entitled *The True Life of Mao Zedong*, co-authored by three key insiders, Lin Ke, Wu Xujun, and Xu Tao, who had truly unparalleled intimate knowledge of the private Mao and were colleagues of Dr. Li for many years and had been repeatedly quoted in Dr. Li's book. The other appeared in the form of a long interview given by Qi Benyu, one of Mao's secretaries and also described as a friend of Li Zhisui in his memoirs.

By now the so-called inside stories and "first-hand accounts" in the memoirs have been utterly discredited. Scores of those who had worked as Mao's guards, secretaries, nurses, doctors or otherwise had extensive contact with Mao, have stepped forward to call the Random House/Li Zhisui book a hoax and to authoritatively refute its so-called inside information. Not a single person with firsthand knowledge of Mao's private life has come out to support Dr. Li.

But practically all the refutation and exposes of the book has taken place in the Chinese-language media. Although the original version of the book was published in English by Random House and the other language editions are all supposed to be translations of it, most English-language readers are unaware of the overwhelming evidence revealing the book to be a collection of outrageous slanders and fabrications. The principals in concocting the English edition have ignored the controversy in the Chinese-language media. Moreover, some key questions, such as to what extent Random House and Andrew Nathan knew Li was a liar but presented the deliberately crafted half truths and lies as certified accounts of history to smear the image of Mao, remained to be answered in more definitive ways. There was the need to compile the different critiques, testimonies and facts and also to present a comprehensive account of the case.

This book consists of two parts. Part One is a comprehensive critique by Xu L. Dong of the memoirs and its boosting by Western journalists and China experts, based on careful textual analysis of the Chinese and English editions, Dr. Li's several interviews given to Chinese-language media, statements by other principals in the preparation of the book, and statements by former colleagues of Dr. Li. It also develops the critique in the Open Letter regarding the complicity of the handlers of the English edition.

The second part is a compilation of already published documents throwing light on the scurrilous nature of the Random House work. They include the Open Letter, the protest statement from China signed by Wang Dongxing and others which was the subject

of the abovementioned press conference, a subsequent statement from one of the signatories refuting the response to the press conference by Li Zhisui's son, and Qi Benyu's interview, which appeared after Dr. Dong's critique.

The various materials in Parts One and Two show that the purported accounts regarding Mao have been trumped up to pander to the perceived tastes of Western readers and that Li Zhisui lied about all the aspects of his self-portrayal eagerly promoted in the U.S. media to lend credibility to his portrayal of Mao.

By rushing to embrace such a vicious work of propaganda and slander, the book's cheerleaders in the media and academia have violated all journalistic and intellectual standards. Statements made by some commentators in their attempt to assassinate Mao's character have gone beyond antipathy to Mao and, as pointed out by the signatories of the Open Letter and other critics, have been informed by Eurocentric arrogance and contempt for the Chinese people as a whole. The promoters of the book knew that Li Zhisui was less than honest but nonetheless vouched for his credibility. The following analysis will examine, in particular, Professor Andrew Nathan's involvement in this crusade of disinformation and intellectual fraud.

The publication and promotion of Li Zhisui/Random House's book constitute nothing else but the manufacturing and manipulation of public opinion to demonize a great revolutionary and anti-imperialist leader who, though long dead, still poses a threat to the existing order, a process linked to the unequal power relations in the present international information order, its domination by multinational media giants, and cultural imperialism.

Noam Chomsky and others have called attention to the practice of "manufacturing consent," a process of "thought control as conducted through national media and the related elements of an elite intellectual culture."

Before the Open Letter, a consensus seemed to have been successfully manufactured in both the English-language media and overseas Chinese-language media that an important eyewitness testimony had appeared that revealed the "real Mao" behind his public persona. No one challenged the veracity of Dr. Li's purported memoirs.

If this consensus were not shattered, future students would follow the behest of professors the likes of Nathan and Pye, and treat this book seriously as a most valuable source of information. As it is, the false memoirs are reportedly already being used as a textbook in top American universities like Harvard and Johns Hopkins.

If this is a book of unique value as Nathan trumpets, it is for a reason completely different from what he claims: all its "inside stories" are either baseless slanders or not inside stories at all but already published elsewhere. The value of the book and its accompanying hype lies in revealing the mind set of the cultural elite and the process of the manufacturing of consent.

PART ONE

"Eyewitness History" and Mao-bashing

by Xu L. Dong, China Study Group

Although most of Random House's memoirs of Mao's physician is actually devoted to accounts of the public Mao, political events, Party meetings and copious quoting of Mao's pronouncements on political matters, its selling point consists in the interspersed stories and anecdotes offered by the author on the "private Mao," particularly Mao's sex life, which purportedly reveal his dark side never seen before by any outsider.

Without these lurid allegations, the book would not have generated any commercial, media, or political interest.

Even its most ardent boosters did not claim to have found anything of value in its accounts of the public Mao. Richard Bernstein, in his *New York Times* review, acknowledged that Dr. Li's 638-page memoir "contains very little in the way of major revelations" about the political history of Mao's epoch. John E. Wills, Jr. in *Foreign Affairs* found Dr. Li "least surprising, and his information is most likely to be derivative or unreliable, on larger political events."

But the media as well as so-called China experts have been ecstatic about the alleged inside stories and lurid anecdotes concerning Mao, the promotional value of which Random House had obviously been banking on in having the book published in more than a dozen languages. The allegations about Mao's sex life and personality have been treated by the media and Western "China

experts" as definitive evidence that the private Mao was a veritable "monster."

The allegations about Mao's sex life in the English edition of the book are: that Mao had a voracious sexual appetite and countless sexual partners and in particular would regularly go to ballroom dance parties to look for young women for sex; that his sexual activities resulted in his having venereal disease which he spread to countless sexual partners; that Mao practiced Daoist sexual beliefs of completing *yang* with *yin* to prolong his life; that Mao particularly enjoyed sexual orgies involving several women simultaneously; and that Mao also had sex with his male guards.

In addition to these allegations about Mao's sex life, the book also portrays Mao as a master of manipulation, addicted to barbiturates, afflicted with paranoid or delusional disorders, and devoid of human feelings.

Such characterizations have also been eagerly repeated by the establishment media and the China experts.

Bernstein began his front-page *New York Times* article by summarizing what he called an "extraordinarily intimate portrait of Mao" as "an irritable, manipulative egotist, incapable of human feeling," who was "spreading [a sexually transmitted disease] to the numerous young women who shared his bed." He went on to entertain readers with the most salacious elements in Li's portrait of Mao.

Jonathan Mirsky, in his review article "Unmasking the Monster" in *The New York Review of Books*, exclaimed that it is impossible "after reading

Dr. Li's book to regard Mao with anything except horror and rage."

Nathan's Foreword likened Li Zhisui to Suetonius, who chronicled the horrors of Caligula and Nero; to Hitler's associate, Albert Speer; and to Stalin's daughter. He declared that no other dictator "has been as intimately observed as Mao is in this memoir," which in turn was quoted by Mirsky as the definitive evaluation of the book.

The Nathan and Mirsky pieces, reviews by Perry Link and Yu Yingshi of Princeton University, and the special report of *U.S. News & World Report* on the book all focused on these salacious elements, eagerly recounting allegations about Mao's sex life and other vignettes in the dark portrait of Mao painted by Li Zhisui.

Columbia University professor Andrew Nathan claimed that the book was unique among all the works about Mao by Chinese writers because of the aspects left out by others in order not to embarrass the communist regime. When Pye and Nathan touted the "unique" or "tremendous" value of the book, they were referring to these alleged aspects of Mao's life not reported elsewhere.

In addition to what the book had to say about Mao's sex life and personality, the same journalists and scholars also rushed to embrace what the book says about Dr. Li as a leading medical expert and close confidant of Mao: that he worked at Mao's side for 22 years from 1954 to Mao's death in 1976, that he was one of the best doctors in China and was the head of a team of top specialists treating Mao's illness in his final days, that after Mao died Li supposedly organized a team charged with the permanent

preservation of Mao's body, and that he had such a special relationship with Mao as to allow him daily access to Mao, share Mao's most intimate secrets, accompany Mao everywhere and be present on important occasions such as state visits of foreign dignitaries and Political Bureau meetings. Such claims were of course an important part of selling the book as the bare-all account of an "insider."

In fact, there is nothing believable about the stories or anecdotes about Mao. The key accusations are invariably presented in scant fashion. The "China experts" and journalists had advertised the lurid anecdotes and salacious stories in various reviews and promotional pieces, but there were actually few details in the book other than those in the reviews.

The full accounts of the so-called inside stories usually were not much more than those summaries trotted out by the book's promoters. Li would make a one-liner assertion that Mao enjoyed sexual orgies and liked to have sex with several women simultaneously, without explaining how he learned this, whether he saw it himself, or whether he had heard it from someone else; but Nathan, Mirsky and company would treat the assertion as an eyewitness account and extol it as a most believable "inside story."

Likewise, Li did not offer any details to explain his purportedly special relationship with Mao. But Nathan et al. accepted his self-portrait as an article of faith. They all raved about his "unique" access to Mao, that he was in closer touch with Mao than perhaps anybody else and allegedly a member of Mao's inner circle.

Whither vaunted standards

Why did these distinguished scholars and journalists with their vaunted professional standards and training rush to embrace Li and treat his stories about Mao and himself as truthful accounts of great historical value? How did they know Li was telling the truth?

Nathan told *The New York Times* that several photos of Li with Mao "confirm his identity." He was also quoted as saying that "it boils down to the fact that the person who worked with him on the book did a tremendous amount of checking." The article explained that "Professor Nathan was referring to Anne F. Thurston, another expert on China who worked as Dr. Li's editorial assistant."

In his Foreword, Nathan also alluded to expert checking by stating that "official or semi-official works corroborate many details in [Li's] account but differ from his in leaving out [embarrassing] aspects of the story" of Mao's life.

The *New York Times* article said that the photos provided "one important piece of evidence that Dr. Li is indeed who he says he is." Mirsky also pointed to the photos as proof that Li worked for Mao.

All those who saw the need to explain why they believed Li ultimately point to Nathan and Thurston for authoritative corroboration.

Several reviewers did raise the question as to whether Li's accounts were accurate. Mirsky asked rhetorically, "But is it true?" Then he dismissed the question by assuring readers that reputable scholars like Nathan and Thurston "found his book convincing," and concluded that while Dr. Li's claim

of daily contact with Mao from 1954 to 1976 was "not exactly true," there was "nothing about Mao that his doctor did not know." Of course, Mirsky did not offer any support for this belief besides his reference to Nathan and Thurston.

Professor Wills in *Foreign Affairs* lamented that "there is no mention of the location or accessibility to scholars of Dr. Li's notes or his manuscripts," but that "there is no obvious reason to doubt that Dr. Li is genuine and that his book represents a reasonable effort to record his experiences," because "highly reputable scholars of China, Andrew J. Nathan and Anne F. Thurston, helped edit the book."

These reviewers rely mainly on the opinion of one China expert, Andrew Nathan, as certification of the book's veracity and its purported author's credibility. It is Nathan who has kept telling people that the book rings true because Thurston thoroughly checked it out.

Reviewers have also pointed to the photos as grounds for believing Li's accounts.

Dozens of people at different times worked in Mao's staff, including secretaries, nurses, *baojian* (primary care) doctors, and security guards. To suggest that Li's stories should be believed merely because he had worked as one of Mao's doctors is like saying that any claim of being "deep throat" should be accepted as true as long as the claimant worked in Nixon's White House.

The scholars and journalists who rushed to endorse this book must surely know that in order to evaluate the veracity of a witness, account should be taken of such factors as the witness's track record and

credibility, as well as evidence of dishonesty, evasiveness, bias or ulterior motives. In particular, his testimony must be checked for internal consistency and plausibility, as well as against other sources.

In this case, the reviewers found it proper to endorse the book so long as Nathan certified to its "enormous" value. But **Nathan never explained what had been corroborated or how it was possible that the heart of the book, those "aspects of the story" *left out by other works*, could have been corroborated by Thurston's checking with official or semi-official works.**

Bernstein conceded that "in fact, there may never be any rock-solid corroboration for many details that Dr. Li gives, or for the many anecdotes that he tells." Wills confessed that for many of the stories Li probably would be "our only and best source."

These statements suggest what is presumed by Nathan et al. to be an impregnable defense against critics of the book: we can not prove the allegations are true, but you can not prove that they are false either. Nathan and company's support of Li's allegations and anecdotes boils down to nothing but their belief or wishful thinking that Li was intimately familiar with Mao's private life, including his sex life, and was telling the truth.

The onus of proof for the veracity and validity of Li's accounts should rest with those who so enthusiastically endorse the book, but a debate of this nature is never meant to be fair. One side has the resources to package any kind of trash and publish it in more than a dozen languages and be guaranteed wide attention in the leading media of the world. A

central element of the power of the opinion elite to manufacture consensus precisely lies in their ability to shift the central issue of any debate in their favor.

Another reason these eminent intellectuals find it safe to embrace Li's slanders may be found in the statement by Professor Wills in *Foreign Affairs* that Li's book is "sure to arouse a good deal of controversy, with the powers that be in the People's Republic doing everything they can to impugn its authenticity and accuracy." He expected that the only challenge to the book's accuracy would come from official spokesmen in China, and that any refutation of that nature probably would not dent the credibility of Li who had just performed the laudable task of denouncing Mao and Chinese communism, even if Dr. Li were really a liar.

On the contrary, there has been no real attempt by the Chinese government to denounce the book. It has essentially kept silent. Wills never expected the kind of spontaneous denunciation coming from so many Chinese, including the testimonies of many who knew Li. Still less could he have expected that there were so many discrepancies between the Chinese and English editions, which clearly demonstrate a pattern of fraud., for the key elements of Random House's portrayals of Mao and of Li himself not only could not be corroborated by other works, but were often altered in a different language edition of the book.

Ballroom dances, etc. as inside stories

References to ballroom dances are the context most frequently used by Li for his presentation of allegations about Mao's sex life. In the book's index

under the heading of Mao's sex life where about two dozen references are listed under different headings, no less then ten separate references are given under the subheading "dance parties and."

Moreover, Professor Nathan in his Foreword elevated these references to dance parties to the basis for his indictment of the whole Chinese communist system: "Party and army political departments...recruited young women of sterling proletarian background and excellent physical appearance, supposedly to engage in ballroom dancing with the leader, actually for possible service in his bed."

Li gave an "account" of when he first attended a weekend dance party in Zhongnanhai compound in 1955, a few days after he allegedly started working for Mao. He began with his reaction on being asked to the dance party: "Mao, I was astonished to learn, was holding a dance. Ballroom dance had been prohibited after the revolution as decadent and bourgeois, and the dance halls had been closed. But behind the walls of Zhongnanhai...Mao held dance parties once a week."

The inaccuracy and malice of this statement are unmistakable to any reader familiar with recent Chinese history, for before the late 1960's only commercial dance halls with dance partners for hire were banned, not ballroom dancing. Ballroom dance parties were regularly held not only in Zhongnanhai where leaders lived and worked, but in such places as university campuses. Anyone who graduated from a university before the Cultural Revolution can attest to this.

Li would then proceed to "recount" some details: a huge hall, Mao walking in and being immediately "surrounded by a dozen or so attentive attractive young women from the Cultural Work Troupe of the Central Garrison Corps, flirting with him and begging him to dance."

That Mao regularly attended ballroom dancing parties was no inside information for it had been reported on many occasions and was known to much of the general public. The ballroom dancing tradition actually dated back to the Yenan days in the 1930's, a practice reportedly adopted from the Soviet Union. But then Dr. Li would proceed to reveal a piece of alleged inside information: "It would be several years before I understood the purpose of these dancing parties," i.e., that Mao allegedly did not go there just to dance but to pick up young, attractive women to entertain himself.

Later in the book, Li made repeated mention of such parties held in Zhongnanhai, during Mao's road trips, or at important Party gatherings in Lushan and elsewhere, and invariably he would use the context of these dance parties to allege or insinuate an inside story that one or more of the women Mao danced with had sexual relations with him.

He did not explain how he arrived at his conclusions except to say that Mao "did little to hide the fact that he was entertaining young women in his room." The only eyewitness testimony he gave in the Chinese edition in support of his allegation that Mao had sex with the women he danced with was that "often at the height of the dance party, everyone would see Mao take a girl to go into the lounge" and stay inside for half an hour and sometimes as long as

one hour and that "there was a bed" in the lounge. Whatever they did behind closed doors was not further remarked upon.

In recent years, there has been a big market in China for personal accounts on Mao. Many books, articles, and interviews have been published based on recollections of people who had direct contact with Mao, including intimate and detailed accounts by Li Yinqiao, Mao's bodyguard for 15 years; Zhang Yufeng, Mao's personal secretary; and Meng Jingyun, a nurse during Mao's last years.

Many of the so-called inside stories related in the Random House book appeared to be culled from these popular works about Mao, though given prurient meaning. In fact, several authors, and Meng in particular, gave several detailed accounts of the scenes behind the "closed doors" which were the subject of Li's wild speculations, recording many conversations which were vintage Mao.[3]

There is another "anecdote" that aroused Professor Nathan's prurient interest. He exclaimed in his Foreword, "honored by the opportunity, some [girls]...introduced their sisters." Mirsky duly recounted this sensational "inside information" in his review as Mao having "indulged himself with two sisters." But the only incident cited by Dr. Li to buttress his claim was that he recalled one young woman as having introduced her sister to Mao. That some young women got their sisters introduced to

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[3]Guo Jingrong, *The Last Years of Mao Zedong as Told by Meng Jingyun*; Zhang Yufeng, *Unreported Stories of Mao Zedong* (People's Publishing House of Hunan, 1989).

Mao was no inside information, and such things were vividly recalled in Meng's account of Mao's last years.

Total recall and selective omission

Unsubstantiated allegations presented as inside information devoid of factual support are typical of Li's "accounts" of Mao's sex life. In an account of the first of what he alleged were his many midnight conversations with Mao - the only one "recounted" at some length in the book - Li claimed that Mao's mahjongg partners "were usually pretty young girls. While his hand was busy with the tiles, he was also flirting with his partners, using his feet to touch this one's feet or that one's legs under the table." No published sources have reported Chairman Mao playing mahjongg. Thurston, who was hired to corroborate Li's account, inserted a note that Mao had played mahjongg in 1927. So much for corroboration!

Li never explained how he learned this unique inside story. Any responsible author making such allegations should include supporting facts and details in his account. Li, Nathan and Random House did not follow this practice of responsible penmanship. Such omission becomes particularly revealing when contrasted with the attention to minute detail in Li's accounts of the color and fabric of clothes Mao or Jiang Qing wore decades before, Mao's prostate, testicles and genitals, and conversations of little significance that were put in quotations as to impute nothing less than total recall.

The book contains dozens of passages where Li quotes Mao, some filling an entire page, often from occasions when he was not even present. In the

Preface, in anticipation of readers' skepticism, he says "because Mao's language was so colorful and vivid and deeply etched in my brain, I was able to recall verbatim much of what he had said." His account is so filled with non-memorable quotations from trivial conversations, not only from Mao but also from numerous others, that Mirsky, one of his most ardent promoters, was palpably disconcerted: "Dr. Li extends this total recall to conversations with relatives, friends and colleagues. 'It's been a long hard day,' Luo Ruiqing said [in 1955], turning to us. 'Be back here at six-thirty. Don't be late.' Reading such quotations, one must be deeply skeptical." But then Mirsky would hasten to add that the experts who examined Li's account "find his book convincing, quite apart from his quotations." When it came to inside stories about Mao's sex life, the copious quotations and other details were conspicuously missing in the memoirs.

Li alleged that women were so proud to serve Mao that they did not hide their relationship with him and "were uninhibited in talking about those experiences with me," but there was no explicit quotation from anyone that explained how Li could have known what he claimed to know - not from Mao himself, from the women allegedly involved, or even a third party.

Nathan tried to offer a remedy in his Foreword: "One of [the women] told Dr. Li that the Great Helmsman was great in everything, even in bed." Anyone familiar with Chinese sexual mores would find such a statement unbelievable coming from a young Chinese woman at the time. Li felt so uneasy about this statement that he decided to alter it

in the Chinese edition to a statement not containing direct reference to being in bed with Mao; the Chinese translation has a young woman telling Dr. Li: "Chairman Mao is great in everything - simply intoxicating."

The sharp contrast between Li's total recall in inconsequential matters and lack of detail in his lurid allegations is one indication that his "revelations" are baseless. While Random House's selling point for the book is Mao's sex life, and media reports gleefully recounted lurid and salacious allegations therein, anyone looking for details beyond those given in the media would be disappointed.

Discrepancies between English and Chinese editions

The book alleged that Mao enjoyed many girls sharing his bed: "he was happiest and most satisfied with several young women simultaneously sharing his bed"; and "it was at...the height of the Cultural Revolution, that Mao was sometimes in bed with three, four, even five women simultaneously." As a rule there is no account of any facts relating to these one-liner allegations throughout the Random House edition. Dr. Li did not explain how he obtained this knowledge of Mao's alleged orgies or whether he saw or heard anything that led him to his conclusion.

Perhaps even more revealing than the contrast between Li's total recall in many inconsequential details and vagueness in his sexual allegations about Mao are the innumerable discrepancies between the Chinese and English editions.

For example, regarding the allegation of Mao's Daoist sexual methods, all Dr. Li said in the Chinese edition about this matter is: "Mao became a

practitioner of Daoism then [when he was 67]: sex was intended to prolong life and not just for pleasure." That is all there is to the sensationalistic story of Mao's Daoist sexual methods, no mention of *yin*, *yang* or any other details.

In the English edition, another sentence is added: "He was happiest and most satisfied with several young women simultaneously sharing his bed. He encouraged his sexual partners to introduce him to others for shared orgies, allegedly in the interest of his longevity and strength," which was duly quoted by Mirsky in his review.

In addition to removing the reference to venereal disease in the Chinese text, Dr. Li also doctored the Foreword written by Nathan so that no reference to venereal disease appeared in its Chinese translation either. The allegation of venereal disease in the English edition was purely fabricated to create media publicity for the book and to smear Mao's name. Likewise, the Chinese edition does not make the assertion that Mao liked to have sex with men as alleged in the English edition.

When the Open Letter drew attention to these discrepancies, some of Li's defenders in the Chinese-language media argued that the English edition may have added a number of sensationalistic allegations to attract media attention but that the assertions and anecdotes in the Chinese edition have not all been proved untrue. One right-wing writer, Lu Keng, admitted that Li in a long conversation shortly before he died had said that Mao did not have venereal disease, but Lu proceeded to claim that Dr. Li supposedly did not like the way Western media

focused mainly on the sensationalistic stories in his "memoirs" about Mao's sex life!

Li's self-exposure

There were two extensive interviews of Dr. Li, and a piece written by Dr. Li himself, "A Reply to Questions about My Memoirs," in which he sought to respond to skepticism among Chinese about his allegations (strangely, among the supposedly critically-trained, leading American scholars and journalists there was no skepticism to speak of: they eagerly lapped up Li's transparent fabrications as gospel truth).

Dr. Li tried in particular to explain three things: which was the original text, and which the translation; why there were glaring discrepancies between the two editions; and, in particular, how much he really knew about Mao's sexual activity.

One interview was published in *Kaifang* (*Open*) magazine in Hongkong, on October 26, 1994. The other interview appeared in *The Nineties* magazine, also published in Hong Kong, in December, 1994. In the former, **Dr. Li declared that the impression that Mao had tens of sexual partners was exaggerated out of proportion; that the media such as BBC caused this unfortunate and excessive focus on Mao's sex life; and that it was not possible for him to say how many sexual partners Mao had!**

How does this statement by Dr. Li square with what was trumped up in the Random House book and dutifully trumpeted by the eminent and unbeholden American scholars and establishment media? Neither interviewer directly pursued this line of inquiry, but

The Nineties article alluded to the contradiction between Li's later statement and the book's allegations. The interviewer made a rough count of the many references in Li's book to Mao's "girl friends," "female companions," women he regularly "entertained" or "rested with" in his room, etc. The number of women specifically implicated by the book in a sexual relationship with Mao exceeded two dozen.

The *Kaifang* interview is particularly damning to Li's credibility: "*Q*. You alluded [in your book] to Mao going to bed with young girls only in a rather oblique fashion. **Did you ever see Mao in bed with a woman? *A. No. It would not have been possible.*** I would not do it anyway. I actually never used the term 'in bed' in my book, because I never saw it personally."

It was certainly amazing for Li to later claim that he never referred in his "memoirs" to Mao being in bed with any woman. What about the dozens of women he directly implicated in his book, even if many references in the Random House edition were removed from the Taipei edition, such as "I often watched [Mao] take a young women by the hand, escort her to the room and close the door behind them"; "[I was] even more shocked to learn [the young school teacher's] long time liaison with Mao"; and "their romance faltered, and Mao arranged for her to marry the military official"?

Mao as heartless drug addict

In addition to allegations and insinuations on Mao's sex life, Dr. Li also tried to depict Mao in private as an evil, heartless man. In particular, he

characterizes Mao as devoid of human feelings, a master of manipulation, addicted to barbiturates, and afflicted with paranoia. Just like Li's allegations about Mao's sex life, these denigrating accounts and remarks on non-sexual aspects of Mao's private life, were eagerly picked up by Nathan, Mirsky, and their fair company. These can also be shown to constitute nothing but vicious character assassination by examining their contexts and comparing the Chinese and English texts.

One typical example of Li's character assassination is found in the way he vilified Mao as "devoid of human feelings," a charge deemed important enough by the editors to deserve mention in the index. The "evidence" he gave to support his charge was supposedly an incident he "witnessed" almost 40 years before: Mao watching a performance where a girl on the top of a human pyramid fell and was injured, and Mao allegedly not seeming to be perturbed. Li did not adduce evidence to support his evaluation of Mao's inner world, but proceeded to speculate on the cause of Mao's alleged inability to have human feelings.

This is the oldest trick in con-artistry: if you do not have facts to support your assertion, then assume it is true and offer a theory as to its possible cause. Li speculated that "perhaps he had seen so many people die that he had become inured to human suffering." He then said that Mao's wife, Yang Kaihui, and many other relatives had been killed by the Kuomintang, and his eldest son had also been killed in the Korean war. Li asserted that he "never understood [Mao's] apparent callousness, for he

"never saw him express any emotion over those losses."

This is actually nothing but Li's own utmost callousness and malice. It runs in the face of all the evidence in the public record as well as various accounts of Mao as a passionate, hot-tempered poet and revolutionary.

Mirsky chose to explain away Dr. Li's idiocy by saying that perhaps Li did not know that one of Mao's poems expresses deep sadness about the murder of his wife, Yang Kaihui. To seriously claim that perhaps Li did not know about Mao's most popular poem is ridiculous. It would be like saying that perhaps Mirsky never heard of the Beatles, for it would be extremely difficult to find an intellectual of Li's generation not familiar with this poem.

The characterization "devoid of human feelings" in the example just examined was removed from the Chinese edition, presumably because people in China were familiar with Mao's image as a passionate man and with his large body of poems which expressed human feeling in very refined and moving ways.

To demonstrate Mao's indifference to human life, in the Chinese edition Li claimed that to Mao the lives of Chinese people were hardly worth a dime because "Mao often told me 'we have such a big population, ten or twenty million deaths is no big deal.'" This is vintage Dr. Li "remembering" - no context, no recollection of circumstances, just a damning remark standing alone, with no details to prove or disprove it.

But there was another Dr. Li speaking a different tongue, in English. This remark had to be

altered in the English edition for Mao would have been quite obtuse to have "often" told Dr. Li that ten or twenty million deaths were no big deal.

Dr. Li denounced Mao as a "marvelous actor" and the "greatest manipulator of all." He claimed that Mao faked sickness to the Soviet ambassador to test his reaction, and that before the ambassador was called in Mao rehearsed it several times. But in the Chinese edition, Mao only jokingly asked the attendants whether he looked like a very sick man, with no mention of repeated rehearsals. All these discrepancies indicate that Li and his handlers concocted stories from beginning to end, particularly in the Random House version, to sell the book and revile Mao.

Random House and Nathan were also eager to pin the label of "drug addict" on Mao. The term *an mian yao*, ordinarily translated as "sleeping pill" in English, is instead repeatedly translated as "barbiturate" in the English edition, apparently for its nice marketing ring. Nathan's unremittingly villificatory Foreword predictably declared, "Dr. Li dosed [Mao] constantly with barbiturates." The English edition contained the following assertions that were not in the Chinese: Mao "was addicted to sleeping pills and had been for more than twenty years"; "even before I took up my post, Fu worried that Mao might accidentally overdose on barbiturates"; "when I first learned of his habit, I warned Mao not to take the drugs."

Which is the translation, which the original

The examples given above are but a fraction of the innumerable passages where the Chinese and

English edition differ materially. The question is, which language edition is the original, which the translation? Is the Chinese translated from the English, or vice versa? The answer to this question should have been quite straightforward, for any responsible publisher of a book in different language editions owes it to the readers to declare which is the original, or the relationship of the different language versions, but Random House and China Times Publishing Co. of Taipei seemed deliberately vague about the matter. The two editions were published simultaneously. Both claimed to be a translation, and the English edition lists the name of its translator, Tai Hung-chao. The Chinese edition lists both Chinese and English translators, as if the original manuscript were in some mysterious third language.

The second question is, why all these discrepancies between the two language editions which are in no way the result of the normal translation or editorial process? No one with inside knowledge of the production of Li's book has responded to the criticism by the Open Letter regarding the discrepancies between the English and Chinese accounts of Mao's sex life. Some principals in the publication and translation of Dr. Li's purported memoirs, such as Jason Epstein (the chief editor of Random House who took a personal interest in this project), Andrew Nathan, Anne Thurston, and Tai Hung-chao, as well as those working for the China Times Publishing Co. of Taipei which brought out the Chinese edition, have remained silent in the face of charges of fabrication made by the Open Letter.

Revealing statements from three principals, however, shed light on the questions of which is the

translation and which the original, and on the discrepancies between the Chinese and English editions. One is Tai Hung-chao, the translator, whose statement will be analyzed later. The other two principals are Li Zhisui himself and Liao Li-wen, an executive editor of China Times Publishing Co. of Taipei, who was in charge of the publication of the Chinese edition and worked closely with Li Zhisui. Their explanations were prompted not by the discovery of discrepancies relating to accounts of Mao's sex life, but by a discrepancy in a story having to do with Deng Xiaoping.

Deng Xiaoping story

In a chapter about the Lushan meeting in 1959, Dr. Li said that Deng was not present at the meeting because he was in a hospital in Beijing, having tripped and broken a bone. In the English edition, Dr. Li said that he was told by the director of the hospital, Dr. Shi, that Deng got a nurse pregnant during his stay in the hospital and that she was forced to have an abortion. This passage was removed from the Chinese text.

Professor Yu of Princeton referred to this discrepancy in a long review, published in four installments in *China Times Daily* of Taiwan, which was on the whole very positive about the book. Professor Yu expressed regret that the "inside story" about Deng Xiaoping had been removed from the Chinese edition. Yu believed this was deliberate, and that the Chinese text, as a translation, should not have departed from the English text.

Yu was assuming the tone of an objective scholar who so cared about academic or literary

standards that he could not but register his concern about this obviously deliberate departure from the English text no matter how much he liked the book.

He did not, however, say a word about all the discrepancies between the English and Chinese editions in the passages vilifying Mao. Yu applied rigorous intellectual standards when he found it in his political or ideological interest. In this case he blew the whistle because he wanted to draw people's attention to the scandal about Deng. He kept quiet about the other innumerable discrepancies relating to Mao because he did not want to cause doubt about Dr. Li's assertions.

Yu is a prominent right-wing scholar and has excellent standing with the political and media elite in Taiwan. His criticism, therefore, had to be responded to. So Mr. Liao, as a senior editor of the China Times group, issued a short statement which appeared on the side of the last installment of Mr. Yu's four-part review: "Dr. Li, after carefully considering the issue, concluded that there was no need to report hearsay which was not verified and did not contain enough details, and he wished to remove it, but the person in charge of the book's publication at Random House did not consent. Ultimately Dr. Li took out these vaguely stated passages from the Chinese edition."

Shortly after Li died, Liao wrote a piece in *The China Times Weekly* in which he claims Li repeatedly emphasized to him by letter and by phone that the Chinese edition was the standard for all the language editions, i.e., "the definitive edition." Li "personally edited and finalized the Chinese text to ensure every sentence and even every word was

proper used."[4] Thus Liao was clearly saying that the English edition was not entirely in keeping with Dr. Li's memory or true opinions. In case of discrepancies, the Chinese text should be considered the only version which had the blessings of Dr. Li himself.

But was not the Chinese edition supposedly a translation from the English? Shortly afterwards, *Kaifang* magazine published posthumously a piece by Li Zhisui, entitled "A Reply to Questions about My Memoirs." Apparently one question Li had in mind was, which was the original, which the translation.

Li said, "the Chinese edition was translated from the English, and was not [my] original [Chinese] manuscript." He said further that "14 language editions, all translated from the English edition, were published simultaneously. I originally intended to publish my Chinese manuscript as the Chinese-language edition, but Jason [Epstein of Random House] did not consent, for that would result in two different versions [of my memoirs]."

So the Chinese edition was supposedly a translation from the English, but at the same time the materially altered Chinese edition was the definitive text!

Another question was why the Chinese edition differed from the English; in particular, why the story about Deng and the nurse was missing in the Chinese edition.

In his "Reply," Li claimed that a substantial part of his original Chinese manuscript was cut by

[4]"My Literary Relationship with Dr. Li Zhisui," *Kaifang* magazine, Feb. 26-Mar. 4, 1995.

Thurston, but in the Chinese translation "certain historical anecdotes, sayings in local dialects, and slang were added." Moreover, "there is a notable difference between the two editions relating to Deng Xiaoping, for "whatever happened when Deng stayed in Beijing Hospital was told" to Li by Dr. Shi. Li Zhisui claimed that he suggested it be deleted from the final draft since it was impossible to confirm, but Jason [Epstein] decided "it should stay."

On the other hand, the reason for its deletion from the Chinese edition was that the China Times Publishing Co. was "currently having exchanges with Mainland China," and "the persons in charge of publication of the Chinese edition feared the retention [of this story about Deng] would harm those exchanges."

So Li Zhisui claimed that, contrary to the statement of Liao, it was not he, Li Zhisui, but executives of China Times Publishing Co. like Liao, who removed it from the Chinese edition. That is, Li blamed Liao, and Liao blamed Li, for taking it out from the Chinese edition.

Obviously they knew it was wrong for the Chinese translation to depart from the English text, but they did it anyway. Then Dr. Li and Liao cooked up a facile excuse to justify the deletion: that it was a story he heard from someone else and that the story was vaguely stated and short of factual details.

Of course, this was not the real reason for its deletion, for had this been so, all the summary allegations slandering Mao should have all been deleted. Compared with the latter, the story about Deng could be considered a paragon of clarity and documentation: it had the dates and named the source

who was in a position to know about the alleged pregnancy and abortion.

This statement by Li Zhisui was patently misleading and disingenuous, reflecting his habit of evading blame and covering up deception with still more deceptive statements: **it was not his responsibility that the story about Deng was kept in, for it was Epstein's decision; nor was it his responsibility for taking it out because it was Liao's decision.**

He said he was in favor of removing it from the English edition, but he could not have really meant it, for otherwise he would not have written it and submitted it for translation in the first place. Even when he got cited for bowdlerization by someone of prominent standing in his own camp and he was forced to cook up some excuse, he still maintained the lie that this was the only "notable" discrepancy, besides a few folk sayings and local slang added to embellish the Chinese edition.

More discrepancies

The Chinese translation of Nathan's Foreword has been altered in a number of places to differ materially from the English edition. For example, Nathan said in the English edition that "one of [the women] told Dr. Li that the Great Helmsman was great in everything, even in bed." This apparently was an attempt to remedy a problem Nathan had with Li's account: Li alleged that women were so proud to serve Mao that they did not hide their relationship with him and "were uninhibited in talking about those experiences with me," but there was no explicit quotation from anyone that explained how Li could

have known what he claimed to know - not from Mao himself, from the women allegedly involved, or even a third party. But even Li was embarrassed with Nathan and watered Nathan down in translation to having the young woman say: "Chairman Mao is great in everything - simply intoxicating."

Immediately following the Foreword is the Preface by Li Zhisui. There the pattern of calculated differences continues.

For example, Li claimed in the English edition but not in the Chinese edition that beginning in 1977 he reproduced from memory more than 20 volumes of notes from those he had burned during the Cultural Revolution.

There is another passage in the English edition which also was removed from the Chinese edition: "Because Mao's language was so colorful and vivid and deeply etched in my brain, I was able to recall verbatim much of what he had said."

These calculated differences continue in the Acknowledgments, which follow the Preface. The contributions of two persons, Yamin Xu, who worked on both the Chinese and English manuscripts, and a late Dr. Tian Beichen, who allegedly brought some of Li's "diaries" - here reference to "diaries" instead of notes seems another deliberate inaccuracy - from Beijing to the U.S., are mentioned in the Acknowledgments of the English edition and disappear from the Chinese edition.

By now, it should be obvious that Dr. Li's claim of verbatim recollection of volumes upon volumes of notes is hogwash.

He did not make the claim either in the Chinese edition that all the quoted passages from Mao

were taken from their "private conversations." That is why there was no reference to the verbatim recall of Mao's words in the Chinese translation of the Preface, and why he dropped his acknowledgment of "Dr. Tian" for bringing "diaries" from Beijing to the U.S.; there likely were no such diaries anyway.

In the text proper, deliberate discrepancies start from page 1, where the reference to himself as one of the best doctors in China was removed from the Chinese edition, and discrepancies crop up chapter after chapter until the last page.

The final part of the book is a section of notes done by Thurston, which did not escape Dr. Li's radical surgery. Some were simply removed, and others altered beyond recognition, all for one purpose: to avoid embarrassing questions regarding the accuracy of his accounts.

The discrepancies show an unmistakable pattern of deliberately attempting to deceive or mislead readers. In his "Reply," Dr. Li did not mention that many allegations about Mao's sex life and other remarks reviling Mao in the English edition were either removed or altered in the Chinese edition. So far neither Nathan, Thurston or Epstein have said anything about such blatant bowdlerization, the many deliberately crafted discrepancies between the English and Chinese editions.

Reasons for discrepancies

To Western observers, it would seem illogical why someone who had denounced Mao as evil incarnate would find it necessary to alter details of his accounts and water down his stories. But Li Zhisui's behavior was not really so mystifying. He was guided

by two considerations: the reaction of people in the U.S., particularly persons like Epstein or Nathan who were his newfound benefactors, and the reaction of people in China. On the one hand, he wanted to reveal "secrets" and "inside information" about Mao deemed valuable by Western propaganda and to curry favor with media honchos like Epstein. On the other hand, he wanted to minimize the negative reception by people in China: he did not wish to be perceived merely as an unscrupulous liar smearing Mao's name for money. He wanted to sound more credible and less outlandish. And he also wanted to avoid unnecessarily antagonizing influential people in China.

Li Zhisui dealt with the conflict between these considerations by saying different things in different tongues to different audiences. Hence the deliberately crafted discrepancies. Most of the discrepancies pertain to allegations reviling Mao. Stories which might be deemed of great value by American journalists and "China experts" would be considered most outrageous by Chinese and exposed as falsehoods by people in a position to know the truth.

Many other discrepancies involve not assertions about Mao, but about Li himself. In order to enhance the value of his "inside information" to Random House and anticommunist propaganda, he had to make many untrue statements to dress himself up as a true insider, a most trusted confidant of Mao, one with "unimpeded access" to Mao.

Many in the West do not know the role of a *baojian* (primary care) doctor in China, so when he claimed he was present in meetings of Party leaders or with foreign leaders, Western readers would believe

him. But knowledgeable Chinese will not often be so taken in. Hence in the Chinese edition, many such exaggerated self promotions did not appear.

In some cases, the discrepancies relate to statements neither about himself or Mao, but about leaders still alive and influential in China. The most notable example is of course the one about Deng cited above. Another example involved Yang Shangkun on a shopping spree, which was removed in the Chinese edition because Yang was a powerful man. Statements that would embarrass Deng or Yang might please his new benefactors in the U.S. but were not considered beneficial to the interests of either Li or the China Times Group in Taipei and, therefore, had to be removed from the Chinese edition.

That Dr. Li and other principals in the crafting of the Chinese edition took pains to keep Li from being seen as blatantly lying seemed to have to do with two quite practical reasons. One is more obvious: if the Chinese edition is right away seen as slanderous trash, then it would not have its intended effect. The other reason is more subtle. In this context, a note is in order about one aspect of the current opinion climate regarding Mao in China, which many China specialists in the West fail to grasp. Despite the high esteem in which Mao continues to be held among the majority of Chinese people, there is an influential minority, including some intellectuals and Party leaders, who don't like Mao and what he stands for and would not be unhappy with a book denouncing Mao as a ruthless dictator or womanizer.

The very fact that Random House and China Times Group continue to profit from business deals

with China and have close cooperation with important Chinese leaders is proof that to revile Mao is not unacceptable in today's official climate in China. But to revile Mao with blatant fabrications and lies would be a different matter. Even those inside China who dislike Mao and what he stands for would feel embarrassed.

The dilemma for Dr. Li and the China Times group was that his book minus those fabrications or lies would have lost its entire value in the U.S. If the book merely had denounced Mao as a womanizer and speculated that Mao had several girl friends, without the inventions of venereal disease, group sex or bisexuality, who would go agog over it? The seemingly mystifying literary surgery thus becomes quite comprehensible.

Dr. Li's literary surgery on the Chinese edition with regard to the Random House book's allegation that Mao had venereal disease shows this approach. The charge of VD against Mao was a prized "expose" in the eyes of Nathan and other handlers, for the eradication of venereal disease had long been considered, even by anticommunist observers, a noteworthy achievement of Mao's China.

The Random House edition claimed: "With so much sexual activity, venereal disease was practically inevitable," followed by an allegation that Li had discovered Mao and a female companion had trichomonas vaginalis, which was actually a common disease caused by a parasite, communicable not only by sexual activity. But that was all Nathan and company needed to remake history.

Nathan exclaimed in his Foreword that Mao was spreading "venereal infection." Mirsky chimed

in, "he spread the venereal diseases to the women he slept with." Thus the English reading public would believe that not only was Mao a womanizer but that the eradication of venereal disease in the People's Republic of China was pure communist propaganda.

But this would have been too outlandish a charge in the Chinese edition, so the words "venereal infection" in the Foreword as well as the remark, "with so much sexual activity, venereal disease was practically inevitable," disappeared from the Chinese edition.

One might think that it would require a stupendous effort to pore through and compare meticulously the two language editions in order to uncover so many discrepancies. But if you know pertinent aspects of Chinese social and cultural realities, it is a relatively simple task: if you see a statement reviling Mao that would be quite out of the ordinary in the Chinese context or implying a special role for Dr. Li beyond that of an ordinary physician, go check the Chinese edition, and more often than not, you would find one of those discrepancies.

For example, when you see in the Foreword that a woman is reported to have told Dr. Li that Mao was great in bed, you can safely bet it would not be so reported in the Chinese translation, for such a statement, although quite commonplace in a post-Freudian, sex-obsessed culture, would be extremely unusual in the Chinese context at the time, where the word "great" was never associated with the word "in bed." Similarly, when Dr. Li claimed in the English edition that Mao refused to clean his genitals, saying "I wash myself inside the bodies of my women," you can bet it will be removed from the Chinese edition,

for that would be totally out of character for someone of Mao's cultural background.

Li's self-portrayal

Much of what Dr. Li "intimately revealed" about Mao was either untrue or already in the public record. But in an age of marketing and public relations, practically any trash can be packaged and sold as an article of value. In order to sell half-truths and outright lies as historical revelations, not only the messages have to be designed and packaged to attract public attention; often, more importantly, the image of the messenger has to be thoroughly reworked as to make him look like someone in a position to make the revelations.

In this case, an ordinary doctor had to be dressed up as someone who had a much more intimate knowledge about a patient than he could have obtained from his professional relationship.

In order to make his stories and "revelations" sound credible, Dr. Li was portrayed by himself and his handlers as one of the best doctors in China; as Mao's personal doctor from 1954 until Mao's death in 1976; as having talked to Mao on an almost daily basis, with Mao routinely discussing with him intimate political or personal matters, including major political struggles and sex; was Mao's English teacher, many of his daily contacts with Mao taking place in the context of English lessons; was allowed by Mao to join him in dinners or talks with visiting foreign leaders; was present in some Party meetings exclusively for top leaders where he was able to witness historical events; started to put down what he remembered from his years of contact with Mao in

1977, soon having more than 20 volumes of notes, including many "colorful and vivid" conversations Mao allegedly had with him; and, having played an important role in Mao's inner circle, was able to come to the U.S. with all the secrets he knew.

In the English edition, Dr. Li claimed on page one of the book: "[I was] in charge of the medical team - sixteen of China's best doctors and twenty-four excellent nurses - trying to save [Mao's] life." Li never had an outstanding reputation in Chinese medical circles. Indeed Li felt more than a little uneasy about describing himself to Chinese readers as the one of the best doctors in China. This claim was removed from the Chinese edition. It was not on account of suddenly acquired humility, but that the claim was too blatant and offensive, bearing in mind that the Chinese medical profession is highly status-conscious.

More central to Random House's need to bolster the credibility of Dr. Li's account and his value as a witness is the claim that as one of Mao's doctors he saw and talked to Mao about his political views and personal problems on an almost daily basis. His handlers obviously were taking advantage of Americans' ignorance of the system of *baojian* doctors. *Baojian* literally means "to protect the health." The task of a *baojian* doctor is similar to that of a general practitioner, giving medical checkups and ministering to common ailments. When a serious illness occurs, specialists would be sent for or the patients would check into a hospital.

Being Mao's doctor was not a position that automatically commanded professional renown. For example, Li Lingshi, who Li referred to

contemptuously as a former dancer and girlfriend of Mao and was one of the two nurses at Mao's side in his last days, was also a *baojian* doctor for Mao. Li Zhisui himself started work as Mao's *baojian* doctor when he was a relatively inexperienced physician.

How often did a *baojian* doctor get to see the leader he served? It depended, of course, on the leader's health needs and habits. Dr. Li seemed deliberately vague about his daily work arrangement and exactly where his office was. He created the impression that he was a member of Mao's household, but this was not true. His office was not even in the same building where Mao lived. By his own account, he was not unlike an ordinary general practitioner, who would be sent for when his patient needed him.

Mao was known to have little use for doctors nor did he have much respect for their opinions, and he was in generally good health until the 1970's.

It is documented that Mao rarely sent for his *baojian* doctors. In a talk on January 24, 1964, Mao gave the following views on *baojian* doctors in general, and on his *baojian* doctors in particular: "The system of *baojian* doctors in China was modeled on the system of Soviet Union... **I have a gentleman's agreement with my *baojian* doctor: I will send for you only when I have a fever; no fever, I will not send for you, nor will you come to see me. If I do not see my *baojian* doctor for one whole year, then he must be given a lot of credit. If I see him every month, he must have done a really lousy job as a doctor.** The reason high level cadres have a lot of health problems is because they are too pampered in their daily lives [and don't get enough exercise]. We emulated the Soviet way [blindly]... A doctor must

not be prevented from treating many different kinds of patients. The matter calls for reform."[5]

Mao seldom needed Li's professional services. In order to sell to unwitting readers the portrait of a true insider, Dr. Li was dressed up by Western journalists and China scholars and in the book itself as a most trusted confidant of Mao, having "unimpeded access" to the Chairman, and privy to his most intimate secrets and inner thoughts. But in the same book, Mao was described as extremely suspicious to the point of paranoia, a master of deceit such that his closest associates fell one after another for failure to discern his true intentions.

For an ordinary physician to seem to know Mao so intimately, a special relationship had to be concocted between him and Mao way beyond the distant relationship between a general practitioner and an infrequent client.

To assume an ordinary physician would know Mao's secrets is like assuming that anyone working in the White House staff would not only know President Clinton's political secrets but also his inner thoughts and sex life.

Neither Dr. Li nor his American handlers have shown how a doctor got to be so trusted by Mao. At one point in the book, Dr. Li suggested that perhaps Mao really did like him, but he probably had forgotten that at an earlier point in the book, he characterized Mao as "devoid of human feelings, incapable of love, friendship, or warmth."

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[5]*Long Live Mao Zedong Thought* (a collection of Mao's speeches and talks disseminated among Red Guards and reprinted in Hongkong).

From all that has been revealed about Mao's personality and habits in many other accounts of Mao's private life, it is not at all believable that Mao would develop a unique relationship with someone of Li's outlook and character. Obviously Li was not a thinker or a serious scholar, nor had he any unconventional wisdom that would interest Mao. Li had little interest in any kind of ideas or theories, whether literary, political, historical or social. Jiang Qing sneered that all his historical knowledge was picked up from Peking operas.[6] He could not even finish the classic novel, *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, which was Mao's favorite.

Li was neither a man of ideas nor a man of action. He painted in his book the self-portrait of a sycophant; his only concern, as he himself put it, to survive and get promoted. He did not even get to see Mao often for professional contact. So what was it that could have explained his allegedly intimate private contact with Mao? If he had such close contact with Mao as he claimed, this in itself would have been revealing information about Mao which would call for elaboration.

Andrew Nathan claimed that the unique value of the Li Zhisui/Random House book lies in "the combination of access and insight." The book jacket of the English edition claimed that Li's position as a physician of Mao "put him on almost daily contact with Mao." Moreover, "for most of these years, Mao's health was excellent; thus he and the doctor had time to discuss political matters."

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[6]Interview with Li Zhisui, *New Asian Americans* journal, Jan./Feb. 1995.

It really stretches too far one's credulity to believe that Mao would find the time and motivation to send for Dr. Li "almost daily" just for private chats. In the English edition, Dr. Li first referred to his unique access in Chapter One, when he described Mao's last days. He mentioned that in those days everyone else, including Hua Guofeng, Mao's successor, had to go through Mao's secretary, Zhang Yufeng, in order to get to Mao, but he was the only exception. He stated, "As Mao's doctor, [only] I was allowed unimpeded access."

This boastful statement was again toned down in the Chinese edition to read: "as Mao's doctor, only I, when performing a medical examination, had some opportunities to see Mao and have a few words with him."

Again in the English edition, Dr. Li claimed that since "Mao returned from Beidaihe [in the summer of 1955], I began seeing him every day." This would sound immediately suspect. So an explanation was added: "the excuse we often used was his study of English." This explanation was naturally not found in the Chinese edition. It is ludicrous to say that Mao would need an excuse to see Dr. Li every day; **actually it was Random House which needed an excuse**. That Mao would find time to get English lessons almost daily from Dr. Li, whose English was far from expert, would likewise be unbelievable to a knowledgeable Chinese reader.

To bolster the impression that he did have many memorable conversations with Mao, Li put quite a few passages in quotations, purportedly reconstructed from his conversations with Mao. What is truly revealing, though, is precisely the lack of such

conversations as would be expected from an author of "memoirs" who allegedly had many personal contacts with Mao. Compared with the numerous accounts that came out during the recent boom of reminiscences relating to Mao's private life, the paucity in this book of Mao's casual talks on diverse subjects cannot be more conspicuous.

Mao was a charming and spontaneous conversationalist. He gave his views readily on subjects ranging from literature to politics to philosophy; he could easily converse on all these, and his casual talks captivated his audience regardless of their different intellectual and educational backgrounds. What he said to nurses or bodyguards or dancers were invariably found by most educated readers to be of enormous intellectual interest.

In Dr. Li's account, there were, however, relatively few conversations which sounded vintage Mao. There were a few passages which purported to be a reconstruction of what Mao told him in private in connection with political issues or what he heard at important Party meetings, but these were actually reported elsewhere and already on record. Moreover, on many of the occasions where Dr. Li said he was present, most likely he was not there to hear Mao directly, but he reported them anyway as eyewitness accounts.

Non-eyewitness "eyewitness"

The book's account of the launching of the anti-rightist campaign quoted Mao repeatedly, but all the noteworthy elements of Mao's statements were already well known. Some of the pithy and colorful language had long been among Mao's most widely

known quotes for years. The only striking aspect of Li's account is that he and Random House presented Mao's statements in a way that an unwitting reader would get the impression that Mao actually said those things to him in private.

For example, Li would say, "'We want to coax the snake out of their holes,' Mao told me around this time." This famous phrase, of course, was not something Mao told him in private but was in the public record and long familiar to many. Professor Nathan, naturally, would pick this up out of context and put it in his Foreword as yet another revelation of Mao's evil mind.

Two pages later, Dr. Li reported another purported statement to him by Mao about his tactics in the anti-rightist campaign: "'I handle my opponents by letting them attack first,' Mao told me. 'Only later do I strike back. I have three rules: First, I follow the ancient philosopher Laozi. I...do not initiate action. When under attack, I retreat, doing nothing, remaining silent.'"

Of course, anyone who had read Mao's published talks would have been familiar with this quotation. So in the English edition, Li made an even more ridiculous claim: **"I would hear my late night conversations with Mao delivered a day or two later in the form of a speech"!** In the Chinese edition, Dr. Li left deliberately vague whether a statement was "quoted" from his own (fictitious) conversation with Mao or merely a reprint of something said when he was not actually present. For what knowledgeable Chinese would believe such a fantastic story that Mao invited a relatively new staff member to discuss his political views as a rehearsal

for his speeches? Li practiced this sleight of hand in quoting many statements by Mao in the Chinese edition.

One of the longest statements by Mao recorded by Li is the speech delivered at the Chengdu meeting in 1958. In the Chinese edition, the quoted statement was one full page long, but did not cite the source nor explain whether he was there or not. With his low rank, Li could not participate in this meeting. Li seemed oblivious of the need to cite sources if he did not hear the statement directly, or to ensure that the quoted words were identical to the original statement.

Random House saw the need for a different presentation. It would not look credible to quote Mao's speech in a meeting without citing the source; moreover, it would not be interesting for a book purportedly revealing secrets of Mao's private life to merely report on a meeting already on public record. So the handlers of the English edition performed a kind of surgical operation no legitimate editorial process would permit. While the Chinese account began the quoted passage with the remark, "Mao stated in his speech at the Chengdu meeting," the English edition dropped this reference to Mao's speech at the meeting; instead, it began the corresponding passage with the remark "during our talks in Chengdu, he complained about the country's lack of leadership and described the Party elite as 'a bunch of zombies with a slave mentality.'" Instead of putting the entire passage in quotations as the Chinese text did, the Random House version was largely stated without quotations, punctuated with only a few selected quotes, obviously to make it look like a

recollection of casual conversations that took place many years before.

After the end of this "recollection"of what Mao had to say, there was a further remark that years later during the Cultural Revolution, the author "would remember conversations like this." The colorful language about "a bunch of zombies," which again was duly picked up by Nathan in his Foreword, was not in the corresponding passage in the Chinese edition. Dr. Li did report a similar remark in the Chinese edition, albeit in a totally different context. Allegedly during an English lesson in the fall of 1961, Dr. Li claimed, "Mao said something that really shocked me. He said, 'all the good Party members are dead, the only ones left are a bunch of zombies.'"

One of the most colorful and important statements Mao made in the last decade of his life is his famous letter to Jiang Qing, dated July 8, 1966, in which he analyzed Lin Biao and the Cultural Revolution. Dr. Li claimed in the book and in his interview with Jin Zhong, editor of *Kaifang* magazine, that he was with Mao in Wuhan when Mao wrote the letter, which was a manifesto of revolutionary Marxism. Dr. Li claimed that he saw the original and copied it down, but said it was written in Wuhan, when in fact it was written in Shaoshan, which shows that Li had no idea what Mao was doing. Li probably heard about the letter years later like when it was circulated after Lin Biao died in an air crash in Mongolia.

Random House promoted the memoirs by creating the impression that Dr. Li was by Mao's side on important occasions and, therefore, had a lot to say about historical events in China. As a rule, the

English edition would make a direct reference to his presence, but the Chinese edition would be more vague. The reason is clear. Although casual Chinese readers might not have immediately felt dubious about Dr. Li's presence in many meetings reserved for higher echelon leaders, such passages would generate skepticism among more knowledgeable people. The Chinese Communist Party was a very disciplined and highly hierarchical organization. Party grade mattered a lot.

Incidentally, Li Zhisui never clearly explained what his Party grade was; but in the English edition, he mentioned a complaint by Jiang Qing in 1961 that while Wang Dongxing and Ye Zilong were all grade seven, she was ranked only nine, "just the same" as Dr. Li. The reference to the same status as Dr. Li was not included in the Chinese edition, for grade nine was a high-level cadre, but in 1961, as a primary care doctor, Dr. Li must have been either a low-level cadre below grade 17 or a middle-level cadre between grade 14 and 17. With Dr. Li's low status in the Party, how could he have participated in important meetings as alleged in the book?

The Lushan meetings of 1959 were a historical event, the climax of the inner Party struggle regarding the Great Leap Forward campaign which, along with the Cultural Revolution, is one of Mao's most controversial policies and strategies. The Li's "memoirs" gave a sketch of the positions of Mao, Peng Dehuai, and other leaders, mostly by quoting from their statements at several crucial meetings. The Chinese edition was not clear whether he was quoting something he heard in person using his powers of

total recall or something he heard or read about afterwards.

For example, the Chinese edition concluded from "Mao's short statement at the opening session" that Mao had a certain position on the Great Leap Forward. The corresponding account in the English edition, on the other hand, struck out the reference to Mao's statement at the opening session; instead, it began the same passage with the remark "my notes record him as saying" without any indication on what occasion it was given.

Such discrepancies clearly show that Random House was dishonest. There was no need to quote from his alleged notes - his notes were supposed to have been burned at any rate - as Mao's opening statement had been published. The Chinese edition did not give the same account, which had been invented by Random House in the English edition to mislead readers. The intended effect could not but be to create the impression that Dr. Li was actually present in this high-level Party meeting.

Dr. Li also gave an account of the crucial July 16 meeting of the CPC Standing Committee when Mao began his counter attack against Peng Dehuai. He reported which leaders were present and which were absent at the meeting. But was Dr. Li himself there? The Chinese edition again is characteristically unclear, but the English edition suggested that Dr. Li was present by making a special note: "Mao's staff listened as the standing committee talked." Knowledgeable Chinese readers would hardly believe that every member of Mao's staff would have been allowed to observe the meeting. That Dr. Li was not present at the meetings he described is further

confirmed by his interview with Jin Zhong, during which Li painted a scene where Mao clashed with Peng Dehuai during the historic meeting in Lushan and quoted some emotion-laden, rhetorical words from Mao. **Jin Zhong asked a question that was asked by many readers of the book: "Were you there?" But Li replied, "No."**

Dr. Li described in the book two occasions in which he claimed to have met with foreign visiting dignitaries, British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery and Soviet leader Anastas Mikoyan. He first mentioned Montgomery in his account of Mao's views about his eventual death. He "recalled" that Mao told Montgomery five possibilities about his eventual demise. This actually had been reported elsewhere in a widely read account by Xiong Xianghui, who was present throughout Montgomery's visit. But there was a curious discrepancy between the English edition and the Chinese edition of Li's "memoirs" on the date the visit took place - the former placed it in September, 1961, and the latter in May, 1960. Later, he referred to this visit by Montgomery again, where both editions placed it in May, 1960.

Montgomery visited Mao twice, in 1960 and 1961, and it was the 1960 visit Dr. Li had in mind. Why was the date in the English edition different? The Random House editors knew that Mao's talk on his eventual demise took place during Montgomery's visit in 1961; in a footnote by Thurston in connection with the earlier passage, she noted Mao's talk with Montgomery as reported by Xiong. Li knew of the 1960 visit but had heard also of the quite widely known talk of Mao with Montgomery, so he presented

himself as having heard it in person even if he was not there.

Dr. Li had yet to perform another surgery before he was done with the Montgomery visit. What if Chinese readers would note the footnote which referred to Mao's talk with Montgomery in September, 1961, as reported by Xiong and feel skeptical about Li's eyewitness claims? Li, therefore, removed the footnote from the Chinese edition.

Li "reported" that in 1957 Soviet leader Mikoyan came to see Mao in Hangzhou on a "secret mission" for talks on China's development of nuclear weapons. Dr. Li claimed, "Mao asked me to see [Mikoyan]," and that in turn Mikoyan "wanted to impress on [Li] the horrible destructiveness of the atom bomb." The book "reported" a fantastic conversation between Dr. Li and Mikoyan: "'I am a physician,'" I had to reply to his warnings. "'I know very little about the atom bomb. But from the point of view of medical ethics, I oppose it. It is just like other weapons. It kills people.'"

Here we are hearing the voice of a humanitarian idealist, a brave young romantic, which is so out of character with the Dr. Li reflected throughout the book, a cautious man always watching his words in order not to possibly cross Mao, one who said that his survival depended on his silence, and that he survived all the political campaigns that would sweep China over the next two decades by watching in silence.

Dr. Li "recounted" Mao as meeting with his former wife, He Zizhen, in 1961, again claiming he was there. But the meeting happened in 1959 during the period of the Lushan meetings, not in 1961. Li

actually was not the first one to make this mistake. There were two important Party meetings held in Lushan, in 1959 and 1961. There had been back-alley information that the meeting with He Zizhen took place during the Lushan meetings. Some believed it was during the 1961 Lushan meetings. There were writers like Li who reported the event based on hearsay and got the time wrong. But since the detailed account by Shui Jing, who was directly involved in arranging this meeting, the question of the time of the meeting has been settled beyond any doubt. Besides, it is established that Mao only met He once since they separated.

Thurston inserted a footnote in this connection: "One Chinese source puts the meeting with He Zizhen in 1959. Another agrees that it was in 1961." The recent confirmation of this 1959 meeting in widely circulated journals and books could hardly have escaped Thurston's attention. Did she add the note to demonstrate her scholarly objectivity and meticulous attention to accuracy or to cover up a falsehood? Li apparently did not like this footnote, for it raised a question about the time of the visit. So, as usual, he altered the footnote in the Chinese edition to read that in 1959, prior to this visit, Mao met He once in Shanghai. This footnote blatantly demonstrates total disregard for factual accuracy. Li had heard some back-alley report that He Zizhen lived in Shanghai, which he reported in his account of the "1961 meeting" in the book, but by 1958 He Zizhen had already moved to Nanchang, which is not far from Lushan. As usual, Li had made up his so-called eyewitness account.

Li's medical revelations

To treat information regarding a patient's health as confidential is a basic tenet of the medical profession. Dr. Li, Random House, and Professor Nathan, in order to show that Li had unique inside information, violated this fundamental principle. Li seemed particular eager to describe Mao's lower anatomy: that he allegedly found Mao's prostate smooth and normal and had massaged his prostate to get sperm for a lab test; that Mao's sperm cells were dead; that the foreskin of his genitals was long and exceptionally tight and dirty inside because he never washed it thoroughly; that Mao's left testicle was smaller than normal, the right testicle not being in the scrotum but in the abdomen, i.e., an undescended testicle. No self-respecting physician would disclose such strictly personal information, even if it were true. Dr. Li also alleged that Mao never brushed his teeth and had stopped bathing since the founding of the People's Republic of China. These "revelations" were designed to denigrate Mao as an uncouth peasant.

Dr. Li claimed that Mao and female friend had trichomonas vaginalis and that Mao must have gotten it from promiscuous sex, though in the same story he indicated that the woman most likely got it from her colleagues in a dancing troupe for they shared towels and clothing. Even if true, no respectable publisher should pay a doctor for such information about his patients to sell to the public, and any scholar of integrity would view such an unethical disclosure with revulsion, but in fact Nathan and Random House even embellish it and then treat it as some kind of major discovery.

In his interview with Jin Zhong, Dr. Li again displayed his habit of relying on spurious excuses to excuse his total lack of ethics. He rationalized, "By Western standards of medical professional ethics, it does not seem proper. But it depends on the person concerned. In the case of an ordinary person of course, the individual's right to confidentiality must be respected, but Mao was not an ordinary person."

Dr. Li also ventured into pronouncing on mental disorders. In the Chinese edition, he mentioned several times that Mao had "persecution delusion disorder," but Thurston did not seem so gung-ho about Li's excursions into psychiatry. For example, Li claimed that Mao had an unreasonable aversion to the swimming pool in a villa in the outskirts of Chengdu where Mao stayed for meetings in 1958, but encouraged the staff to swim in it and to tell him whether they felt anything unusual about the water, apparently fearing the water was poisoned. Dr. Li claimed that it was years later when he "saw Mao grow increasingly prone to suspicion that [he] realized this was indeed the symptom of the onset of 'persecution delusion disorder.'" This was replaced in the English edition by the word "paranoia," a vague term used in everyday parlance.

Li also talked about an incident in 1965 in a villa in Hangzhou when Mao allegedly said, "there is something poisonous here. I can not stay here any longer." Dr. Li commented in the Chinese edition: "Years ago, I sensed that Mao had persecution delusion disorder, when he suspected the swimming pool was poisoned. Now his condition appeared to be worsening." The English edition not only used again the milder and imprecise word "paranoid," but

Thurston put in a footnote that "Mao's fear of poison may be more reasonable than appears," for she herself once stayed in that villa (which had later been used as a hotel for tourists) and had found that "the most striking thing...was the peculiar odor, so strong that sleep was difficult," caused perhaps by mildew. Naturally this note was removed from the Chinese edition.

Li also asserted that Mao had "weak nerves," translated as neurasthenia in the English edition, and that Mao had symptoms of both anxiety and depression. Thurston noted in the English edition that "though neurasthenia is no longer recognized as a disease in the U.S., its symptoms, by whatever name, were very common in China," and that "here and elsewhere, Dr. Li uses the term depression in the popular rather than the strictly medical sense, since he was not trained in psychiatry."

Later in the book, Li claimed that beginning in the winter of 1956, Mao had a serious bout with depression, and stayed in bed for several months, "rising only to use the bathroom." The English edition made a small addition: Mao would only rise to go to the bathroom and "make an occasional speech," for it was documented that Mao was politically quite active during that period. Thurston noted that "again, Dr. Li is using the term depression in the popular sense" and that "the timing may be off here" for "Mao was quite active between November 1956 and May 1957," having had several important meetings and given several speeches at this time. This note, as usual, was removed from the Chinese edition.

When Li claimed that Kang Sheng, a prominent Political Bureau member, had

"schizophrenia," Thurston added that "the Chinese definition of schizophrenia is clearly much broader" than the clinical definition used in the U.S. Li also said in the Chinese edition that Jiang Qing, Mao's wife, had "double personality" and "compulsive obsessive thoughts," but Thurston removed any reference to multiple personality or compulsive-obsessive disorder in the English edition. Li's dabbling in psychiatry proved expert enough, however, for the likes of Ian Buruma who in his review in *The New Yorker* extols Li as giving "a true picture of the hidden side of the historical madman."

Dr. Li alleged that Mao had unduly interfered in the medical care of some top leaders. In the English edition, he suggested that Mao blocked immediate surgery for Premier Zhou's cancer. Nathan duly took this up in his Foreword, proclaiming that "Mao controlled his top colleagues' medical care, denying some of them treatment for cancer, because he was convinced that cancer can not be cured." Again the English and Chinese editions differed, with the Chinese edition merely hinting that Mao's attitude toward cancer might lead to the decision not to perform surgery immediately. Neither did Li mention the doctors' opinions or the views of Zhou himself regarding treatment.

Li also asserted that "it was an unwritten rule that no politburo standing committee member or any member of Mao's staff could undergo major surgery without permission from the Chairman." As usual, he did not disclose the source of this "unwritten rule." That a major operation of a CPC Standing Committee member might be discussed and approved by the Standing Committee is quite understandable, though

it is hard to imagine that Mao would interfere in the treatment of every member of his staff.

The English edition made a direct allegation: "[Mao] would not give permission for Zhou Enlai's surgery, but he would find someone to replace him. The time had come to reinstate Deng Xiaoping." This entire passage was not found in the Chinese edition. When Zhou's health deteriorated, Li said that both Zhou and his doctors agreed surgery was necessary, and Mao reportedly gave his approval upon hearing the explanation by a lab technician about the need for immediate surgery. The English edition published by Random House of course made the usual sexual innuendos by claiming that Mao gave his consent because "he had been charmed by the young female lab technician" who was "in frequent contact with the Chairman." This again was not found in the Chinese edition. A recent biography of Zhou Enlai by Quan Yanchi, *An Insider's Portrait of Zhou Enlai*, convincingly established that the allegations of interference in the treatment of Zhou's illness were untrue.

Li and Chinese leaders

Another part of Random House's selling of a "true insider" who tells all is the attempt to advertise Dr. Li as someone who had unique insight and information not only about Mao but also about important events or prominent persons. The book jacket hawks itself as supplying "surprising portraits of Zhou Enlai and other top leaders." Li gave an account of Mao's trip to Xiangtan, Hunan, in 1959. The Chinese edition reads: "Hua Guofeng, the Party secretary of the Xiangtan Region came to greet us. It

was the first time Mao and I had met the man who would become Mao's successor 16 years later. Mao wiped his face with a towel, and had a little rest. 'You go on with your own work,' Mao turned to Hua Guofeng. 'You don't have to accompany us; Shaoshan is my hometown, and your presence, as the head of the prefecture, would make the local folks a bit inhibited.'"

This is a typical demonstration of Li's "total recall" - he could even remember Mao wiping his face. But there is a problem with this "story": it is documented that Mao first met Hua in 1954. So in the corresponding paragraph in the English edition, the second sentence was instead made to read: "It was the first time I had met the man who would become Mao's successor some sixteen years later."

Later on, Li described an expanded Central Committee meeting with seven thousand participants. He "recalled" that Hua was there, and remembered verbatim what Hua said at the meeting as one of seven thousand cadres! Li again said that Mao and he first met Hua in 1959. Thurston was forced to include a note to the effect that Mao was reported to have met Hua in 1954. Li of course removed the note from the Chinese edition.

Then there is Dr. Li's "account" of Mao's scribbling three notes to Hua in his last days: "With you in charge, my mind is at ease"; "act according to the decisions laid down"; and "don't be nervous, take it easy." These notes were regarded as legitimizing Hua's succession. Did Li happen to be there again to serve as a witness of history? Despite his vaunted memory, he did not seem to be able to make up his mind.

In his interview with Jin Zhong, he gave an "eyewitness" account: "The three notes to Hua Guofeng were like Mao's will. When he wrote them, I was there. He had difficulty writing, and he had to hold the pen with his entire hand. So the characters did not look good esthetically." But in his so-called memoirs, Dr. Li gave a different account: "I was at the swimming pool on April 30, 1976 [when Hua came to see Mao]. After the meeting [with Mao], Hua had told me of their conversation and showed me the notes Mao had written." So Dr. Li was not exactly there.

"Swimming pool" was the name for Mao's living quarters consisting of his bedroom, study and living room. In the account in the Chinese edition, Li was no longer even claiming to be in the "Swimming Pool," but somewhere in the vast grounds of Zhongnanhai, though he still wished to be considered part of history, for Hua allegedly showed him the notes immediately. In truth, it is hardly credible that Hua, who was known for his cautious and methodical approach and adherence to discipline, would reveal this sensitive information, and in such a frivolous way, to Li, who in the first place was a political nobody.

As mentioned earlier, Li told a story about Deng Xiaoping and a nurse in the English edition, but removed it from the Chinese edition. He likewise made a reference to Yang Shangkun in the English edition which was removed from the Chinese edition. Li said that when Mao went to Shanghai for an enlarged meeting of the politburo in January, 1960, some leaders and Mao's staff went on a shopping spree. "I did, too, and bumped into Yang Shangkun

and Ye Zilong one afternoon as they emerged from a shop laden with purchases."

This sentence was removed from the Chinese edition. Yang was still alive and powerful, and Li had written a letter asking for Yang's help to keep his apartment in Beijing. Although Yang did not do anything to help him, it was Li's usual policy not to offend the powers that be where possible.

There were many mentions of Zhou Enlai in the book, but mostly in passing. What was noteworthy was Li's extreme malice toward Zhou. He repeatedly denounced Zhou as Mao's "slave" and a "hypocrite" who would go to any length to do Mao's bidding to protect himself and to demonstrate his absolute loyalty regardless of the harm his action might cause others. But the vilification of Zhou was always done without the slightest contextual support; the accounts would have not led an unbiased observer to Li's denigrating conclusions and sinister interpretation regarding Zhou's character or motive.

The first vilification of Zhou Enlai is found in a passage alleging a report to Deng Yingchao, Zhou's wife, on Jiang Qing's psychological problems. Li said he wanted to see Zhou about Jiang's psychological problems, but Zhou was not available; instead, he and another doctor were received by Deng Yingchao. She allegedly told them that she was saddened to hear that Jiang might have mental problems and advised the doctors to concentrate on providing the best possible medical care for Jiang and not engage in speculation on her mental condition. Moreover, she asked the doctors to keep the matter discreet and not spread rumors.

These remarks sound absolutely innocuous and nothing extraordinary in the given circumstances, but Li exclaimed that he suddenly lost all respect for Zhou Enlai and his wife, realizing that "Deng was not being honest" and that this must have been the joint response of Zhou and Deng to curry favor with and show loyalty to Mao. He concluded that "Zhou Enlai was Mao's slave, absolutely and obsequiously obedient to Mao."

But actually, by his own account, it was Li who did precisely these things; that to survive and to protect his family, he talked and acted against his own conscience, that it was the only way to keep his position and step by step climb upward, that usually he would try not to get involved in political struggles, but sometimes had to protect his own interest at the expense of others, that he believed Mao demanded total loyalty from his staff and other political leaders, so Li's central concern had always been to ensure Mao's continued trust. This self-portrait by Dr. Li is by no means that of a man with moral principles.

Dr. Li claimed that Zhou Enlai curried favor with Lin Biao. He said he told Zhou that Mao had asked him to organize a research project on bronchitis and that Mao did not want to tell Lin Biao about the project, but Li found out later that Zhou had reported the project to Lin. The story again sounds like sheer fantasy. Dr. Li had himself said that by the mid-1960's, he began to lose Mao's trust; now he claimed that "Mao had ordered [him] to tell Zhou" to keep the project secret from Lin, the number two leader. If Mao wanted to start a secret project, he would have told Zhou himself without going through Li.

Contra Li Yinqiao

Aside from Mao and Zhou Enlai, there is a third person who stands out as the target of Dr. Li's unconcealed venom, Li Yinqiao. Dr. Li reported that Li Yinqiao was seen shopping at the store of the hotel where Mao stayed, and suggested that his money must have come from sources less than legitimate; he also recounted an "inside story" about Li's affair with a woman on Mao's staff.

Who is Li Yinqiao and what made him deserve the special attention of Dr. Li? He started to work as Mao's bodyguard in 1947, later became Mao's chief bodyguard, and left in 1962. He was practically unknown and lived in relative obscurity, until a several years ago when an enterprising writer, Quan Yanchi, sought him out and did extensive interviews with him. The result was a marvelous portrait of the unofficial and casual Mao, a collection of close-ups of the private life of the Chairman.

Quan's book, *Life At Mao's Side: The Recollections of Mao's Chief Bodyguard*, published in 1989, became by far the best selling book in China that year. Quan actually did several books with different publishers under different titles all based on his interviews with Li Yinqiao. His chronicle of the private Mao made him a rich man and arguably the highest paid writer in China in the early 1990's. They also catapulted Li Yinqiao into a household name. It inspired many subsequent works based on personal observations of Mao, and triggered a veritable boom of memoirs and recollections of Mao by others.

This boom in stories relating to Mao was but a part of a more general social phenomenon. Since 1988 or so, there clearly emerged a revived interest in

Mao, which developed into the "Search-for-Mao fever" in the period following the June massacre in Beijing in 1989. The books based on Li Yinqiao's recollections contributed a great deal to this Mao revival. He was veritably one person who could claim to have the most intimate contact with Mao, and had unique access to and unparalleled close observations of the private Mao between the age of 55 and 70. When he started working for Mao, he was still a teenager while Mao was a guerrilla leader.

Quan's books, based on Li Yinqiao's recollections, remained the definitive work on the private life of Mao, which succeeded in rendering the image of a larger-than-life, political Mao into a lively portrait of a warm-blooded person.

Most of the now familiar facts of Mao's private life, like Mao's temper, irregular sleeping patterns, eating habits, constipation problems, etc. came originally from Li Yinqiao's accounts. They differed from the traditional work about Mao in that they were personal and almost apolitical. They did not have any of the laudatory, glorifying adjectives and political analysis and formulations which abounded in previous writings about Mao.

The contrast between Quan's book on the private life of Mao based on Li Yinqiao's accounts and Dr. Li's "memoirs" could not be sharper. The former was only about one third of the length of the latter, but it had a wealth of original information previously unreported, contained in plain, matter-of-fact accounts of what the bodyguard personally saw and heard; it is not loaded with the opinions, speculation or "insights" of the author, nor is it encumbered with numerous accounts of well-known

public events. What came out was a portrait of the private Mao, certainly an extraordinary man, but multidimensional, believable and immensely likable.

Dr. Li's "memoirs," however, contains hardly any credible revelations and is replete with wild speculation and opinions, a negative portrait based not on presentation of facts but malicious imputation and invective. Most of Dr. Li's book was actually about the public and political Mao. In the way that Mao's image was highly politicized and framed in heavily ideological contexts, Dr. Li's book was not different from traditional writings glorifying or demonizing Mao.

There can be little doubt that Dr. Li and company had in mind Li Yinqiao's accounts of Mao's private life in manufacturing their negative portrait of Mao. When Nathan stated in his Foreword that some "semi-official works" had "corroborated" many details of Dr. Li's "memoirs," he was likely referring to Li Yinqiao's, from which Dr. Li had lifted some stories. Similarly, Thurston, in some of her notes which cited "other sources" supposedly corroborating Dr. Li's account, referred mainly to Li Yinqiao. Some of the invectives in Dr. Li's "memoirs," which were invariably repeated in Nathan's Foreword, seem quite odd and abrupt in the particular contexts in which they were found. But if one reads them in connection with others' descriptions of the same events, the reasons for the invectives become much clearer.

Li Yinqiao recounted that Mao gave up eating meat for a period of time. That Mao abstained from eating meat for seven months during 1960 and 1961, when China had a severe food shortage, became known to millions of Chinese not through official

propaganda, but by Li Yinqiao. He gave a matter of fact account of Mao's reaction to what he observed during an inspection tour in the fall of 1960 - Mao chain-smoking, absorbed in thought, muttering about "disaster caused by heaven and man." After their return to Beijing, Mao announced he would voluntarily subject himself to the same ration that was in effect in all the cities in China and would give up eating meat and eggs.

Such a story left many Chinese quite moved, for it had always been taken for granted throughout history that leaders were entitled to their privileges and did not usually give them up voluntarily. Dr. Li, however, tried to put this matter in an entirely negative light, dismissing it as a meaningless act since "his sacrifice had no effect on the famine," though begrudging that "still, the Chairman's gesture won him the admiration of everyone who knew." Dr. Li chose to comment on this not because it was his wont to report everything, but because it had been popularized by Li Yinqiao and other chroniclers. He took it up specifically with the objective of countering the favorable impact of Li Yinqiao's accounts.

In the same chapter about Mao's giving up meat, Li Yinqiao recalled a dinner on Mao's birthday, Dec. 26, 1960. Mao asked Li Yinqiao, Wang Dongxing, and several guards and secretaries to gather for dinner. Mao appeared to be despondent, chain-smoking, absorbed in his own thoughts. Then Mao told them to go to the countryside to investigate and report back to him on the situation of famine there.

In the Chinese edition, Dr. Li also reported the dinner conversation and even quoted (though he

admitted that he was not there) Mao telling a historical story to illustrate that even close friends eventually should part company so each could build his career independently. Dr. Li asserted that he learned Mao was sending Li Yinqiao and Ye Zilong to the countryside actually to get rid of them, and abruptly launched into vituperation: "Mao was a marvelous actor. Not only did he sing different tunes to suit the audience, but would laugh, sneer, get angry, curse or shed tears as a means of winning the loyalty of people and achieving his unstated objectives. Mao was very skillful and used different tactics in 'disposing of' or developing a special relationship with someone in his immediate staff, usually sending this person away to school or to the countryside to do manual labor and experience rural life... Before leaving, this person would always be called in to have a talk with Mao, and Mao would show his concern and even burst into tears, to show how much he did not want this person to leave. The person would naturally be grateful and feel 'honored,' despite being asked to leave, and even frequently boasted about his [parting experience]."

This passage is characteristic of Dr. Li's "memoirs" - general impressions with no specific details to back up them. Readers are left in the dark as to what exactly he saw or heard to give him these impressions. But this passage was more unclear and incongruous than many other equally unsubstantiated assertions. Dr. Li merely portrayed Mao as relating a historical anecdote at a dinner, with no description of "acting" on Mao's part. He repeatedly said that Mao would burst into tears, but he did not claim Mao

doing so at this dinner party or weeping in front of his staff elsewhere.

Who was the person being disposed of who nonetheless felt honored and moved? There was no such description here. This called for editorial assistance. The Random House text was thus made to read: "Mao was a marvelous actor. He was getting rid of key members of his staff, consigning them to hardship and suffering, but even as he fired them, he still wanted their loyalty. So he pretended that they were friends and that he was taking this step again his will, because he needed their help. His friends could almost believe him. They were grateful and moved by his demonstration of concern. But still they did not want to go."

As usual, Andrew Nathan picked up such unsubstantiated imputations in his Foreword: "Dr. Li says Mao was a marvelous actor. He could sentence a retainer to exile with a story so convincing that the victim backed out bowing in gratitude." But it remains unclear what prompted Dr. Li to talk about Mao bursting into tears or the "person" later boasting about his parting experience. The answer to this puzzle is in Quan's book on Mao based on Li Yinqiao's accounts. In the chapter following the account of Mao's 1960 birthday dinner, Li Yinqiao gave a moving, tearful account of the parting scene where both Mao and Li cried. It is clear that Dr. Li had this account in mind when he wrote his "inside story." He wanted to discredit Li Yinqiao's portrait of Mao.

Similarly, Dr. Li's allegations about Mao's personal habits were invented to counter Li Yinqiao's immensely popular recollections. The latter devoted

an entire chapter to describe the **simplicity and aversion to vanity in Mao's daily habits, reflecting both the ethics advocated by Mao and his peasant origin**. This has turned into one of the most endearing aspects in the resurrected portraits of Mao since 1989, particularly because of the **contrast between his simplicity and the prevailing corruption and increasing acquisitiveness among many Party members at present**. In Li Yinqiao's recollections, Mao never used toothpaste and kept his Yenan habit of using tooth powder. He would not change his toothbrushes until they had become worn out. He never used fragrant soap, or any kind of skin lotion or ointment for cosmetic purposes. Mao never wore new shoes, giving them to his guards to wear until they became quite used. Such habits of Mao were distorted by Dr. Li to undermine Li Yinqiao's accounts. Nathan of course eagerly peddled this caricature of Mao in his Foreword: that Mao never brushed his teeth, stopped bathing when the Communists took power in 1949, etc.

Other matters in the memoirs

Another aspect of Mao's personal life that many found most moving in the Mao revival was the martyrdom of several of his family members, among them his wife and his eldest son, and his strictures against special privileges for his relatives. This provides a sharp contrast to many top leaders today, particularly Deng Xiaoping, whose children have gotten rich in a big hurry on the strength of the position of their parents. Dr. Li tried to denigrate this moral prestige of Mao by accusing him of being heartless in allegedly not displaying his feelings about

the death of his family members. By such vicious ways, even the martyrdom of his family members, did Random House et al. revile Mao.

Li's so-called memoirs was blown up to more than 600 pages by drawing copiously from published sources and running amok with unfounded allegations and wild interpretations. Li lived in a most exciting period in Chinese history when revolutionary changes swept China and shook the world, but what came out of his "memoirs,' stripped of its hype and self-inflation, is a life of remarkable uneventfulness. He was never near Mao enough to gain authentic privileged information on what exactly was happening. His claim that Wang Dongxing consulted him about the plan to arrest the Gang of Four is also likely hype. For one thing his "recollection" of the arrest of the Gang of Four differed with now published accounts on factual details. His recollection of this incident was based on back-alley reports and not on any alleged inside sources.

That he could live in a haven of tranquillity amidst turbulent and sometimes violent change was largely a result of his adhering to a strategy which he mentioned repeatedly: do not get involved, keep silent as much as possible, and never risk displeasing Mao. There is one reported matter, the "bugging incident," which had political significance. Unfortunately, his account was again too unreliable. He reported that sometime in late 1958 or early 1959 recording devices had been installed in Mao's train without Mao's knowledge. During a train trip in February, 1961, according to Dr. Li, the person assigned to man the recording device greeted an alleged female companion of Mao, telling her he heard everything

she said in Mao's sleeping car. Li alleged that the young woman immediately reported this to Mao, who was furious. Thurston put in a note that some scholars "doubted that Mao's quarters could have been bugged without Mao's permission," which was of course removed by Dr. Li from the Chinese edition.

Mao's confidential secretary, Lo Guanglu, reported in the book by Ye Yonglie, *Profiles of Mao's Secretaries*, that a bugging incident actually took place.[7] In Dr. Li's account in the Chinese edition, it took place in February, 1961, but Lo gave the date as the summer of 1959. Dr. Li alleged that for this trip "besides the female conductor and two female confidential staff, Mao also brought along a kindergarten teacher... [Mao met her] in a dance party and they began to have frequent contact and grew very close." The Random House edition, however, again spiced this up a whole lot more, alleging that Mao had sexual relationships with several of the women.

Li's handwashing

Dr. Li made his debut appearance in mass media via a BBC special program in 1994 on the centennial of Mao's birth. He got a few minutes to revile Mao by dispensing his "inside information" about Mao's sex life. Subsequently, the publicity about his book inseparably linked the doctor with Mao's sex life. He was widely perceived, even among those who were willing to believe his stories, to be a former insider who sold his "knowledge" about Mao's private life for money. It seems quite evident Dr. Li

[7]Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1994.

told stories about Mao's private life, particularly his sex revelations, because there was a market for such "inside stories."

Although it reportedly proved a commercial failure for Random House, judged by its lackluster sales in the U.S., all Dr. Li cared about was to find buyers like Epstein. What the intelligence and political establishment particularly like about the book of course is its propaganda value. Dr. Li sought to defend his reputation in the Chinese-language media by denying that he was interested in selling "stories" about Mao's sex life for money. In the three articles about him, his two interviews and his "Reply to Questions," Li Zhisui repeatedly claimed that it was not at all his intention to focus on Mao's sex life and that he was not happy that the media had largely focused on Mao's sex life.

In his "Reply," he explained that he wanted the story about Deng deleted from the draft because he had previously had "bad experience" with BBC which interviewed him for nearly four hours, but used only three minutes of the conversation about Mao's sex life and made him "look like someone only interested in prurient stories." In the interview for *Kaifang* magazine, when asked whether Mao had indeed slept with dozens of women, he said this number was much exaggerated, and singled out BBC for complaint: "I am very unhappy with BBC. I talked for four hours, and they only used the part about sex. Moreover, it left out what in my view was the most important point, that Mao used sex as a weapon for political struggle. This is not fair to me."

Then he amplified a little more on his motives for his alleged "revelations" of Mao's sex life - that

Mao was different from other Chinese or foreign political leaders who were reported to be romantically involved with other women because Mao was not only interested in sex but also used women as tools for political struggle, which was why he, Li Zhisui, decided to reveal the "truth."

This of course was a transparent rationalization. No one who reads the book would get the impression that a key aspect of Dr. Li's "account" of Mao's sex life is his using women as weapons in political struggle. There was hardly any story about Mao using women as weapons for political struggle, and only occasional assertions to the effect that Jiang Qing or other women were politically loyal to Mao. Given Mao's standing, it was not noteworthy to find people loyal to Mao.

Li was characteristically vague in his reference to BBC being unfair to him. It could mean that he should not be blamed for the impression that Mao had dozens of girlfriends - though anyone who reads the book would get only that impression - or that he was complaining about being perceived as someone who did it for money, although this was of course the case.

Li claimed he did the book because his wife urged him to write it for "our children, our grandchildren and generations to follow"; that after having devoted his life to the Communist Party, in 1990 the Central Bureau of Guards wrote him asking him to give back his apartment and did take it in 1992; and that he wanted the book to "serve as a reminder of the terrible human consequences of Mao's dictatorship and of how good and talented people living under his regime were forced to violate their

consciences and sacrifice their ideals in order to survive."

Again these reasons are a combination of evasions and half-truths whose purpose is to hide the truth. Dr. Li indeed did the book for the *material* interests of his children and grandchildren. His apartment belonged to the state and like other Chinese he paid nominal rent, but given the housing trend in China, it was potentially a very valuable property, which was what made him so upset about losing it. Li was writing as a former Party member to denounce communism and Mao, and indeed he was paid to do precisely that, but who could believe then that he was denouncing his former beliefs and superiors out of moral conviction?

This is a person described by his new patron, Andrew Nathan, as having the willingness to look away from evil, whose own accounts incontrovertibly revealed him to be an operator, and whose concern about his own "survival" and "promotion" far outweighed his conscience.

Li repeatedly gave the impression that if he had displeased Mao, he would not have been able to survive, and that if he quit serving Mao, he would not be able to "survive" in another capacity. But this seemed to be contradicted by his own account. Many people who had worked in Mao's staff did pretty well after leaving it. Moreover, he admitted more than once that he gradually lost Mao's trust. But despite this, he was surviving pretty well and eventually became the director of Hospital 305. **What he meant by survival is perhaps to prosper in any given environment. In that sense, the last point of the book is perhaps truer than what Dr. Li or his**

handlers intended: he wanted the book to serve as a reminder of how people like him would violate their conscience in order to survive, this time in the U.S.

In his interview with *The Nineties* magazine, Li said that BBC paid him only $500 for his appearance and that a publisher in Taiwan, which published the life story of the Dalai Lama, offered him only $3,000 to $5,000 for his manuscript, so he decided to try an American publisher, succeeding with the first one he contacted, Random House.

In an article written in response to a request from Jin Zhong, the editor of *Kaifang* magazine, to offer some observations upon Dr. Li's death, Professor Yu Yingshi stated that after the Tiananmen massacre **in 1989, Li sent a proposal to the East Asian Institute of Princeton asking for financial support to write a book about Mao's private life**, "but his proposal was not in keeping with the purpose of the Chinese Study Society which we were planning at the time, so we rejected his proposal"; that Yu "still remembered his **[Dr. Li's] English letter - of course, it was written by someone else -** which **referred in particular to Mao's sex life**," and that "**perhaps this was the idea suggested to him by someone who presumed to understand the mind set of American people**, but this made us more hesitant."

This gives us the picture of a hawker of sex scandals, who wanted to sell to the highest bidder. He peddled his sex scandals to Princeton and got rejected; peddled them to someone in Taiwan but only received a low offer; and then hit the jackpot when he got Andrew Nathan and Jason Epstein,

chief editor of Random House, to make a much higher offer.

When asked by *The Nineties* magazine whether he got half a million dollars for his "memoirs," Dr. Li said that amount was no big deal. It was reported in the Chinese press that he might even have been gotten half of the six million dollars Reagan was paid for his memoirs, though associates of American celebrities routinely peddle sleaze or kiss-and-tell stories without ever feeling the slightest unease or any need to cook up some kind of explanation for their motives, unlike Dr. Li who, as described by a Chinese saying, desired both *mianzi* or "face," and *lizi*, i.e., money.

Li's political insights

Most of Dr. Li's purported accounts about the private Mao actually relate to the public Mao, such as the Chairman presiding over historic meetings or launching political campaigns. He sought to portray a Mao of cruelty, ruthlessness and deceit in the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution, confrontation with the U.S. and Soviet Union, the anti-rightist campaign, etc. These are hackneyed accusations. That is why even Li's most ardent American and Kuomintang supporters did not find them of enough interest to warrant recounting. To the West, anyway, a revolutionary Party leader is axiomatically cruel and manipulative.

Professor Nathan was very enthused by Dr. Li's "insight," but other than Li's speculations as to what Mao might be doing in bed, it consisted mainly of opinions likely written by Li's Random House mentors since Li was known to be uninterested in

politics, denouncing Mao's revolutionary line and policies as unmitigated disaster caused by character flaws like ruthlessness, paranoia, megalomania, demand for absolute loyalty, pathological reaction to real or imagined challenges to his power, sinister manipulative tactics, etc.

For example, Li alleged that Mao told him his intention to retreat to the "second line" in the summer of 1956, and that he later realized that Mao's talk about the second line had the hidden purpose of testing the loyalty of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. This "insight" was sheer fantasy. The "memoirs" did not give any evidence that Mao had begun to feel unhappy about Liu and Deng in 1956. Moreover, as shall be presented later, several witnesses have come forward to testify that Dr. Li did not start to work as Mao's doctor until 1957 and had hardly any contact with Mao before that.

Li claimed in the Chinese edition that Mao launched the rectification campaign encouraging criticism of Party bureaucratism in 1957 because he hoped that the masses would follow his lead to attack the Party leaders whom he disliked "including Liu and Deng," but that the people began to speak against the entire Party and so Mao was forced to launch the anti-rightist campaign. Perhaps this "insight" went too far for Thurston as there was not a shred of evidence that the rectification campaign was targeting Liu and Deng, so the reference to Liu and Deng was not in the English edition.

Aside from Mao's alleged concern for absolute power, Random House's "memoirs" repeatedly stressed another factor in its interpretation of political events in China: that Mao since 1958 had purportedly

began to develop ever deeper paranoia and many of the later decisions by Mao were results of paranoia or persecution delusion. This interpretation of historical and political events had all along been the main theme of Kuomintang propaganda. It did not take an alleged insider to write such a tract. Any number of third-rate Kuomintang propagandists or exiled former Communists from China now doing "research work" under China specialists like Nathan or Yu could easily cook up such a book, though the Political Warfare Department of the Taiwan military has pretty much stopped openly churning out such works and not many people are avid readers of dissident magazines.

Zhou Enlai's doctor refutes Li Zhisui

So far Dr. Li's accusations have been shown to be malicious slanders through an examination of the book, comparison between its English and Chinese editions, and Li's own statements elsewhere. The first statement by someone who knew both Dr. Li and Mao, Dr. Zhou Puchang, appeared in *Asia Week*. Dr. Zhou had been assigned to attend to Zhou Enlai's health needs. He stated that Dr. Li was one of the *baojian* (primary care) doctors assigned to attend to Mao's health needs. Mao did not have a personal doctor. Dr. Li was not professionally well regarded; he had the reputation of making himself disappear when Mao's conditions suddenly worsened. Dr. Zhou said he attended many of the ballroom dance parties before 1965, and "judging from Mao's conduct in dancing," Dr. Zhou never "uncovered anything less than proper." He also said that things Dr. Li said about Premier Zhou were not true. "Some of the accounts involving the Premier in my view are

fabricated. For example, the account of [Zhou's] panic upon learning that Mao suddenly fell critically ill on the eve of President Nixon's visit is not in keeping with facts. Li was not there, but I was with Premier Zhou all throughout. In some cases, the facts were correct, but Li's analysis and judgment were completely cockeyed." Dr. Zhang was referring in particular to a "story" by Dr. Li that when Premier Zhou was notified a few weeks before the scheduled arrival of Nixon that Mao had collapsed, Zhou "lost control of his bladder and bowels, soiling his pants."

Wang Dongxing et al.'s protest

In early August 1995, a protest signed by over a hundred people, including Wang Dongxing, Ye Zilong, Li Yingqiao and many others who had daily contact with Mao and had been mentioned in Dr. Li's purported memoirs, reached the organizers of the Open Letter, who called a press conference attended by major Chinese-language media organizations in New York. These associates of Mao made a devastating indictment of Dr. Li's character and credibility. They disclosed, among other things, that **Li was not assigned to work as one of Mao's *baojian* doctors until 1957, rather than years earlier as he had claimed. One quarter of Random House's highly touted "eyewitness memoirs," covering 1949 to 1957, "happened" before Li started working as one of Mao's doctors or indeed even knew Mao!**

Mao's immediate staff attested that **Li did not see Mao frequently and was never a member of Mao's household. He never had any close rapport with Mao. Contrary to his claims, Li was not**

Mao's English teacher or the leader of the medical team that oversaw the final effort to save Mao's life or head of the team entrusted with the preservation of Mao's body or present on Nixon's visit. Neither did he know the top secret plan to oust the Gang of Four, for in the first place such a plan did not even exist at the time. His claims that Mao or Zhou Enlai or Ye Jianying confided in him sensitive Party matters were inventions that bordered on the grotesque. His ostensible late night conversations with Mao were pure fiction, and he invented all the lewd episodes in Mao's private life. Mao liked to work at night and always left his door open with one guard at the gate and one guard at the door: "How is it possible that those of us who were Mao's closest guards, attendants and secretaries never saw or heard of those lurid things claimed by Dr. Li?"

Among the signatories of the protest was Dr. Huang Shuze, who later issued a separate statement to expose Dr. Li's lies. Dr. Huang was Dr. Li's superior and had worked as one of Mao's *baojian* doctors from 1943 until Mao's death in 1976. It was she who headed the team charged with the preservation of Mao's body. The signatories also included former female staff members of the Great Hall of the People and members of cultural troupes. A former dance partner of Mao and a member of the cultural troupe of the Beijing Military Garrison, Wang Lanying, also wrote a separate personal statement rebutting Dr. Li's allegation that Mao's dance partners went to bed with Mao. She particularly objected to Nathan's slander that "women were served to order as food" as insulting Chinese women in general.

Mao's longtime secretary and nursing officer expose Li's lies

Lin Ke, Mao's secretary from 1954 to 1966, and Wu Xujun, Mao's nursing officer from 1953 to 1974, were mentioned many times in the memoirs - almost twenty references to Lin Ke, and thirty to Wu Xujun. They were described by Dr. Li as his friends and portrayed in a positive light, while others were usually cast in negative or neutral terms. They not only appeared in many of Dr. Li's stories as material witnesses but were cited by Dr. Li as sources for some of his claims.

For example, Dr. Li reported that it was Lin Ke who told him the real reason why Mao decided to start the rectification campaign in 1957. Lin Ke was also placed by Dr. Li in a rather dramatic political intrigue: that in 1962, Mao wrote angry comments on the margin of a document, accusing Chen Yun, a Party vice chairman, of right deviation, and attacking his petty bourgeois class background. Dr. Li claimed that the document with Mao's comment was supposed to be forwarded to the Party secretariat, but that Lin Ke was persuaded by a colleague to hide it under his mattress. Dr. Li said that two years later, Xu Yefu searched Lin's room and found the document, which led to Lin's dismissal as Mao's secretary in 1964.

Among the many references to Ms. Wu, two stories stand out. Wu was cited in accounts relating to Mao's alleged "womanizing," once as the source of his information, another time as an eyewitness. In presenting his stories on Mao's sex life, Dr. Li usually would leave them deliberately vague as to how he got his "inside information," i.e., whether he personally witnessed something or just heard it from someone;

he would not cite any known witness or the source of his information. These two references to Ms. Wu are exceptions.

As with Dr. Li's other accounts on Mao's sex life, these two references in the Chinese edition did not correspond to accounts in the English edition. In the English edition the story is that one day Mao was "relaxing" with several young women when "Jiang Qing suddenly arrived from Diaoyutai unannounced, sending the young women into a panic. Alerted by the head nurse [Ms. Wu], they barely had time to hide before [Jiang Qing] burst into his room." Mao allegedly ordered Ms. Wu to tell Wang Dongxing that henceforth the guards were not to let Jiang Qing in without Mao's permission. The Chinese edition added something which was not in the English edition: that Mao and the three women were "sharing a bed under a huge cotton comforter." Wu was not explicitly cited as the source of this story, but Wu was the only other person, besides Mao and his three female companions, reported to be present.

The other reference to Wu as a source of information about Mao's "womanizing" appears in the Chinese edition: that in 1970 Wu allegedly told Dr. Li that Mao had a talk with Jiang Qing and they reached an agreement that Mao would support Jiang Qing politically and, in return, she would not object to Mao's "womanizing." As usual, there is a discrepancy between the Chinese and English editions, for in the English edition Wu is not mentioned as the source for this "agreement" between Mao and Jiang.

In November, 1995, *The True Life of Mao Zedong*, by Li Ke, Wu Xujun and Xu Tao, was

published by Liwen Publishing Co. of Hong Kong. Dr. Xu Tao, Ms. Wu's husband, was Mao's doctor from 1953 to 1957. The book is actually composed of two long statements, one by Mr. Lin and the other by Ms. Wu and Dr. Xu, offering detailed and documented refutations of Dr. Li's fabrications and inventions.

Lin Ke started his statement by recalling his shock on seeing the Random House tome of more than 600 pages: "Working with [Dr. Li]for close to 10 years, I knew him quite well. Frankly, **his contact with Mao was very limited; he had private conversations with Mao on pathetically few occasions. He was just a doctor, how could he have written such a big book about [Mao] and top-level Party politics? How could he have produced any first-hand information never reported elsewhere?"**

Ms. Wu and Dr. Xu start with an overall statement about Dr. Li and his purported memoirs: "We had been [Dr. Li's] colleagues for quite a long time. We knew him very well. Having recently read the book [by Dr. Li], **we found too many accounts in the book simply untrue, and this is not a book [Dr. Li] alone could have written."** Their conclusion is based on their first-hand knowledge that "as Mao's *baojian* (primary care) doctor, **Li Zhisui did not have many direct contacts with Mao Zedong**," and "**Mao seldom sent for his services, still less had occasion to chat with him**"; moreover, "most of the accounts in [Dr. Li's] book pertained to matters of which we had direct knowledge, and [we] knew most of the people mentioned in the book." In fact, **they were present at many of the events, while Dr. Li was not there, but had nonetheless offered his back-alley**

stories as first-hand accounts. Therefore, "it is relatively easy to judge whether many accounts in the book were true or not, especially accounts concerning Dr. Li himself and those relating to Mao's private life or health condition."

Nothing embarrassing to hide in Mao's private life

Ms. Wu and Dr. Xu refute in particular Dr. Li's allegations that Mao led a scandalous sex life and that Mao had countless girlfriends. **They state that they knew Mao's private conduct quite well and that Mao had always been very respectful and courteous to female comrades and consistently advocated respect for women because they were victims of oppression.** Ms. Wu and Dr. Xu testify that "**the doors of Mao's bedroom, office and living room were never closed**, but always open and unlocked. ***Mao's private life and personal relationships were always open and aboveboard, and there was nothing embarrassing to hide.***" Their book fully corroborates the statement of Wang Dongxing and others that **Dr. Li had very rare contact with Mao, did not have any knowledge at all about Mao's private life, and that his stories about Mao's sex life were fabricated**.

These statements offer the most authoritative repudiation of Random House's so-called memoirs and prove that it is a hoax. Lin Ke, Mao's secretary, had the kind of close contact with Mao and insider's view few could match. On the other hand, Ms. Wu was Mao's nursing officer for 21 years. Perhaps no one except Wang Dongxing, Ye Zilong and Li Yinqiao had as frequent direct contact with Mao in as long a period of time and knew as many details about

Mao's private life as Ms Wu. Lin Ke's and Wu Xujun's testimony carry special weight because they are material witnesses in many of the accounts in Dr. Li's memoirs. There are in a position to judge the veracity of Dr. Li's accounts probably better than any one alive except Wang Dongxing.

"Mao in bed with three women" hoax

Ms. Wu stated that Dr. Li's story about Mao allegedly in bed with three women under a huge cotton comforter was a "shameless lie." As is well known, Mao always slept in a bed half of which was occupied by piles of books, so "how could four persons have shared his bed?" Besides, Mao never used comforters but large towels, even in winter. She concluded that "it is indeed despicable for Dr. Li to make up such lurid stories." Ms. Wu emphatically states that contrary to his claims Dr. Li never asked her nor did she ever relate to Dr. Li anything about Mao's alleged "womanizing."

"Zhou Enlai crawling before Mao"

Another example is Dr. Li's story touted by many American reviewers about his allegedly seeing "Zhou [Enlai] kneeling before Mao to trace the route of a proposed motorcade." Li used this "anecdote" to rail at Zhou's subservience and slavish loyalty to Mao and concluded his "story" with these remarks: "For Zhou to kneel before Mao seemed to me humiliating, and I was deeply embarrassed to see a man of Zhou's stature behave that way. Mao seemed to take a sardonic pleasure watching Zhou crawl before him."

To any fair-minded reader, the malice in this "story" is obvious. Ms. Wu gave a detailed account

what actually happened. **Again, contrary to his claim, Dr. Li was not present.** Only four persons were there: Mao, Zhou, Wang Dongxing, and Ms. Wu. The map was not that of a proposed motorcade, but a plan for a large construction project, and both Zhou and Mao were squatting to examine the plan, Mao with a magnifying glass in hand and Wu holding a flashlight over Mao's back.

Dr. Li's "intimate relationship with Mao"

The Preface of the "memoirs" claims that Li Zhisui "was appointed Mao's personal physician and for a period of 22 years, [Dr. Li was] at his side almost constantly, whether in Beijing or elsewhere"; that after being made one of Mao's doctors, he first met Mao in April 1955; that Mao immediately liked him and, at this first meeting, asked him to be his English tutor; that in June, 1955, Dr. Li became the sole personal physician of Mao, and constantly stayed at his side.

Moreover, Li Zhisui claims that being Mao's alleged English tutor enabled him to develop an intimate relationship with Mao through "countless nocturnal chats" which often continued through the night; as a result, he was allegedly "with [Mao] every day, tutoring him in English, talking with him about philosophy," politics, and sex; that "Mao made [Dr. Li] his conversational partner," and "when insomnia struck," Mao would summon him in to chat - "it was not unusual to receive a summons at three o'clock in the morning."

Dr. Li also claims he was very trusted by Mao, who assigned him to read *Can Kao Zi Liao* (*Reference Materials*), a regular compilation of media

information exclusively for high-level Party officials, and to do research on political issues and submit written reports to Mao; that Mao even asked him to be his secretary, but he declined; and that he was "privy to the workings of [Mao's] inner court" and the "tangled and complicated power struggles at the highest level of the party," including Mao's true political intentions and manipulations.

Lin Ke proceeds to demolish these claims by proving that Dr. Li was appointed as a doctor of Mao's in 1957, and not in 1954; during this period, Dr. Li was not on Mao's staff, still less "at his side almost constantly." Lin proves this not only with his own and others' recollections but also with documents from the personnel files, including the **personnel forms filled out by Dr. Li himself**. Lin Ke states that the accounts in the "memoirs" about these three years, such as being together with Mao in Tiananmen during the May Day Festival, the Beidaihe incidents, his English lessons, chats with Mao, and the power struggle at the Eighth Party Congress, were all invented.

In addition to the fact that Li was not even on Mao's staff during these three years, Mr. Lin also offers detailed refutations backed by testimony from other witnesses to prove that Dr. Li was not present at the events he "described." Among other things, he demonstrates that **Dr. Li's accounts of Mao swimming the three rivers in 1956 were actually taken from the published memoirs of Li Yinqiao, even reproducing the same factual errors in that account!**

"Li as Mao's English teacher" hoax

Li Zhisui was not Mao's English teacher. It was Lin Ke who was assigned to help Mao learn English, and he was Mao's English teacher from 1954 to 1966. Lin Ke still has letters Mao wrote him about learning English. The Central Archives has English books used by Mao and Lin but none of Mao and Li Zhisui studying English together. When Lin Ke was away in 1961, Li studied English with Mao a couple of times, but it was actually Wu Xujun who regularly helped Mao study English until Lin Ke's return, whereupon the latter resumed this job until he left in 1966, except for a few months in 1964 when Zhang Hanzhi was Mao's English tutor. Later, Tang Wensheng, Mao's English interpreter, also helped Mao with English. **They all testify that Dr. Li was not Mao's English teacher.**

Dr. Li was an impostor, and the alleged frequent late-night English sessions reported in the "memoirs" never took place. **Dr. Li described his first English lesson with Mao as taking place in June, 1955, at Beidaihe, but in fact he did not even know Mao in 1955.** Moreover, **Lin Ke documents that Mao went to Beidaihe in August, and not June, 1956; in fact, Mao almost always went to Beidaihe in August, except for a few times in July, and *never in June.*** Lin Ke also gave details of the English lessons he gave to Mao in that period, and convincingly proves that Dr. Li invented the alleged English lessons in 1956.

Lin Ke points out that Mao usually studied English during the day. Although Mao often worked into the night, he was very considerate toward his staff, and was not in the habit of summoning them for

chats late at night. When Mao occasionally wished to see Lin Ke after 10 p.m., he would always send a guard to see whether the light in Lin Ke's residence, which was adjacent to Mao's living quarters, was still on. If Mao had ever summoned Dr. Li, who lived far away, for a midnight chat, the guards would certainly have known, and other staff would have heard of it. Lin produces testimony from Mao's guards to prove that the night chats frequently mentioned in the "memoirs" were a total hoax.

Jiang Qing letter

Lin Ke states that Dr. Li falsely claimed in his "memoirs" that he was given the list of members of the Central Cultural Revolution Leadership Team by Mao. Another account concerns Mao's famous letter to Jiang Qing in July, 1966, which was initially shown to only a few persons including Lin Biao himself, and was subsequently recalled and destroyed with Mao's consent because of its sensitive contents critical of Lin Biao. Its existence remained a top secret until well after Lin Biao's death, when it was widely circulated as a Party document. It has become widely known as one of the most important documents reflecting Mao's thinking about the Cultural Revolution.

Dr. Li claimed in the Chinese edition that Mao showed this letter to Zhou Enlai and Kang Sheng before he sent it to Jiang Qing, who circulated it among some core leaders; that he had the privilege of being among the few who was shown the top-secret letter, of which he made a copy before "returning it to the Office of General Administration"; and that he kept the copy all those years, reprinting the full text in

his memoirs as if he were making some sort of first-hand revelation.

Lin Ke conclusively proves that Dr. Li made up all this "inside information." Mao did not show this letter to Kang Sheng, nor was it ever circulated by Jiang Qing; in particular, Dr. Li never saw and copied the letter before it was recalled. In fact, **the letter reprinted in Li's bogus memoirs was not the original version, but the revised version circulated as a Party document years later and widely reprinted, for Jiang Qing copied down the original letter before it was destroyed and this copy of the original text remains in the Party files. Thus Dr. Li's alleged copy of the original letter is an open-and-shut case of fraud perpetrated by Random House.**

Dr. Li did not become Mao's doctor in 1954

Li began to work as Mao's baojian doctor in mid-1957. Prior to that, he could not possibly have had much chance to have contact with M. However, Li advanced his appointment date to 1954 in his Random House "memoirs" and made up stories of these three years. Some forms filled by Dr. Li himself, such as his curriculum vitae, his Cadre Registration Form and his Party Membership Registration, also showed that he became one of Mao's doctors only in 1957.

Lin Ke points out that **Dr. Li moved back the date of his services as a doctor of Mao's to 1954 so he could make up all those English lessons and nocturnal chats and create the impression that during this period he developed a close relationship with Mao, to prepare the ground for his later stories about "intimate secrets" of Mao's private life.** Moreover, the "memoirs" pretended to report "inside information" about the Eighth Party Congress to support Professor Nathan's contention that Mao started to distrust Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping in the course of the preparation for the Eighth Party Congress, and that the Cultural Revolution originated from the conflict between Mao and Liu/Deng at the time of the Eighth Congress.

More hoaxes

Lin Ke states that Dr. Li's claim of being most trusted by Mao simply was a fabrication; he was just a doctor and his contact with Mao was extremely limited. Mao never authorized Dr. Li to read *Can Kao Zi Liao* (*Reference Materials*) , nor did Mao ever ask him to be his secretary.

Mr. Lin produces testimony of Mao's staff that Li did not come to the headquarters of Group One (Mao's immediate staff), and he rarely had a chance to see Mao. Wang Dongxing confirmed that Dr. Li had never been asked to be Mao's secretary or to be Mao's English teacher, for Dr. Li would then have reported this to Wang Dongxing. Only Wang Dongxing, Ye Zilong and Lin Ke, of the members of Group One, had the subscription of *Can Kao Zi Liao.* Dr. Li's description of its contents shows that Li did not even know the nature of this material.

Dr. Li did not have any direct knowledge of power struggles nor did Mao talk to him about politics within the Party leadership. Lin Ke points out that Dr. Li's accounts of top-level Party politics were always replete with fabricated details which only "reveal that he had no knowledge of the political life

of Mao and other central leaders." It was known to Mao's staff that **Mao never talked about other central leaders, or about who should be appointed to what leadership position. This, for Mao, was a matter of principle. "I had much more contact with Mao than Li...and, moreover, I was his secretary, but Mao never talked to me about such matters."** "Li was just a doctor, whose job in Group One was limited to care for Mao's health. As for myself, being Mao's secretary for more than a decade, I had access to tens of thousands of secret cables, documents, internal information papers, and had attended at least twenty to thirty central Party meetings, while **Dr. Li was not in a position to attend even a single one of such meetings."** He points out: **"How could [Li] know any secrets? How much could he have heard directly from Mao?"**

The second chapter of Lin Ke's statement is devoted to the refutation of accounts in the memoirs purporting to reveal inside information about important political meetings of the central leadership, starting from the Eighth Party Congress in 1956. Lin Ke points out that **Dr. Li was never present at any of these or other meetings of the central leadership. Lin Ke participated in the meetings Dr. Li reported about in the memoirs, but never saw Dr. Li there. Lin Ke cites key witnesses such as Gao Zhi, one of Mao's secretaries, and also gives detailed evidence showing that Li's "inside information" are all lies.**

Dr. Li "revealed" the following "inside information" about the Eighth Party Congress: that Mao allegedly complained to him that Liu Shaoqi convened the Congress without asking for his consent

and did not give Mao a chance to review in advance the draft of the Political Report which Liu delivered, that Deng Xiaoping asked Mao not to take part in certain meetings, and thus Mao was effectively excluded from participation in the discussion of the Political Report; that Mao did not like certain parts of the Political Report, in particular its advocacy of collective leadership and opposition to a personality cult; that Mao was angry at Deng Xiaoping because Deng delivered the Report on the amendment of the Party Constitution removing the reference to Mao Zedong Thought; that the subsequent political movements Mao launched, including the "rectification" campaign, the "anti-rightist" movement, and the Cultural Revolution were all aimed at overthrowing the political line set by the Eighth Congress; that he, Li Zhisui, was allowed to attend some of the meetings, heard Liu Shaoqi's Political Report, and knew right away that Liu was in trouble; and that this Party Congress marked the origin of the split in the Party and the turning point of the relationship between Mao and his designated successor, Liu Shaoqi.

Lin Ke makes the following refutation, drawing from his own diaries and Party documents: **Dr. Li was not at the Eighth Party Congress and indeed was not even on Mao's staff at that time.** Mao announced in a meeting of Party delegates on March 31, 1955, the decision to convene the Eighth Congress sometime in the latter half of 1956. **Mao personally directed the preparation and the convening of the Congress, including the drafting of the Political Report.** Among the more than 80 successive drafts of the Political Report kept in the

Party files, twenty-one drafts had been personally amended by Mao, and many letters offering comments about the drafting of this Report that were exchanged between Mao, Liu and others are in the Party files.

Documents prior to the Congress show that **Mao had advocated those elements in the Report which Dr. Li claimed Mao opposed, in particular the importance of collective leadership and opposition to a personality cult**. Mao could not have been angry with Deng because the new Party Constitution no longer mentioned Mao Zedong Thought, for it was Mao himself who first advocated that future Party publications not make reference to the term Mao Zedong Thought.

Since 1949, many documents presented for Mao's comments before release show that Mao as a rule asked that the term Mao Zedong Thought be replaced by other variations. In December, 1954, three months before the official announcement of the convening of the Eighth Party Congress, there was a Party circular, which states: "Comrade Mao Zedong has given instructions that in order to avoid serious misunderstanding, the use of the term Mao Zedong Thought should be discontinued." Mao added a written comment on the margin of the draft circular suggesting that in future writings or speeches, the term Mao Zedong Thought should be replaced by wording such as "the works of Comrade Mao Zedong."

There was no animosity between Mao and Liu/Deng at the time of the Eighth Congress, and it was not the turning point in the relationship between Mao and Liu Shaoqi. **Dr. Li alone could not have**

fabricated on his own all this "inside information." It is Western "China experts" like Andrew Nathan who wanted to promote in the name of Dr. Li their shop-worn thesis that the Eighth Congress was some kind of turning point.

The Random House "inside information" is that the "rectification campaign" was a continuation of a power struggle that started in the Eighth Party Congress and that Mao really launched the campaign to depose those whose loyalty to him was suspect, including Liu and Deng; that Mao told Dr. Li of his strategy to "lure the snake out of their holes" to expose and punish the rightists, not caring if hundreds of thousands of rightists lost their lives; that he learned the truth about the "anti-rightist" struggle when Mao took him and Lin Ke along on a train trip to Hangzhou at the end of June, 1957, during which Mao had several talks with him. Li Zhisui, revealing his true intentions and strategy regarding this campaign. But Lin Ke points out that **Mao flew to Hangzhou on July 1, 1957. Thus there was no train trip and no such conversations as Dr. Li claimed to have had with Mao during the fictitious train trip.**

Dr. Li claimed that Soviet leader Anastas Mikoyan came to China in 1957 to dissuade China from attempting to acquire nuclear weapons; that Mao asked Dr. Li to see Mikoyan, who was "clearly shaken" by Mao's "nonchalance to massive loss of human life" and talked to Dr. Li about the horror of nuclear weapons; that Dr. Li bravely told Mikoyan that as a physician he was opposed to nuclear weapons; that Mao told Li no one could stop China from developing nuclear weapons and he was willing to lose tens of millions of Chinese lives in a nuclear

war, which further proved that Mao did not mind killing countless rightists.

Lin's documents that Dr. Li maliciously distorted Mao's position on nuclear weapons. Mao consistently maintained that China opposed nuclear war, but was not afraid of it. When Mikoyan went to China in 1957, contrary to Dr. Li's claim it was **not** for "talks on China's proposed development of nuclear weapons." Existing records give the details of this meeting. **There was no discussion about nuclear weapons.** Li had just started to work then as one of Mao's doctors. **The story of Mao sending a doctor whom he hardly knew to talk to a Soviet leader about nuclear weapons was a blatant lie which mocks common sense.**

Dr. Li did see Mikoyan for less than 15 minutes - the interpreter Yan Mingfu testifies that Li and a young acupuncturist were sent for by Ye Zilong to administer acupuncture for Mikoyan's back pains shortly before his departure on July 6, but Li's story about his conversation with Mikoyan was absolute nonsense. **Dr. Li and his Random House handlers made up this story to portray Mao as indifferent to the loss of human life and support their contention that Mao was prepared to kill hundreds of thousands of rightists. It is well documented and anyone with historical knowledge knows that it was never Mao's policy to kill class enemies but to reform them by re-education.**

Dr. Li devoted long passages to describe the Lushan meetings in 1959. He gave several alleged eyewitness accounts, including an encounter between Mao and Peng Dehuai before the plenary on July 23, 1959, with Mao asking to have a talk with Peng,

which the latter allegedly angrily refused. Lin Ke exposed the fact that **Dr. Li was not present at any of the meetings he "reported." His account of the encounter between Mao and Peng on July 23 was taken from a known work whose author erroneously reported that Peng had refused to talk with Mao. Dr. Li took it to be true and presented it as something he himself had witnessed.**

There was another incident that took place during the period of the Lushan meetings in 1959: Mao's meeting with his former wife, He Zizhen. Dr. Li presented an alleged eyewitness account of this meeting, **even recalling the minute changes of facial expressions of Mao and He and reproducing their "conversation."** But Dr. Li set it in the Lushan meetings in 1961, having apparently seen, with the boom in Mao literature in recent years, some reports which had erroneously set the meeting in 1961.

Lin Ke shows that Mao and He Zizhen met on July 1, 1959, in Building 108. Dr. Li was wrong about both the date and the venue. Feng Yueshong, Mao's guard on duty that day, gave Lin Ke a detailed statement, dated August 8, 1995, describing the circumstances of the meeting, which is reproduced in Lin Ke's book: only two persons other than Mao and He Zizhen were in the building where the meeting took place, namely, Shui Jing, wife of the Jiangxi Party secretary, and Feng Yueshong. They stayed downstairs, while Mao met with He Zizhen upstairs. **Dr. Li was not there, and nobody besides Mao and He Zizhen knew the content of their conversation.**

Dr. Li offered in his "memoirs" what purported to be eyewitness accounts of two important meetings of Party leaders: the Ninth Plenum of the

Eighth Party Congress in January, 1961, and the Working Conference of the Party Central Committee in Guangzhou in March, 1961. Dr. Li "described" a power struggle which pitted Mao against other top leaders, and "recalled" the speeches he purportedly heard at the Guangzhou Conference such as Deng Xiaoping's famous speech about black and white cats to illustrate the difference between Mao and Liu, Deng and other leaders who supported *bao can dao hu*, or household contract production, a form of agriculture responsibility system advocated by Zeng Xisheng, Anhui Party secretary, which Mao vehemently opposed. Li concluded that the Party split deepened at the Guangzhou Conference and that by then very few Party leaders were still following Mao.

Lin Ke again proved that all this "information" was nonsense. The differences among top leaders at the Ninth Plenum and the Guangzhou Conference as described by Li was a sheer fabrication. **No one spoke about the household contract production system at the Guangzhou Conference. It simply was not on the agenda.** And Deng's famous statement about black and white cats was given on July 7, 1962, at the reception of Communist Youth League delegates, not the Guangzhou Conference. **To lie about such a well-known speech parades Dr. Li's incredible audacity.** There was no evidence of serious political differences or a split in either of the two 1961 meetings.

Dr. Li reported that Mao was furious with the Party leadership at the Lushan Meeting of 1961. "One night in the midst of the meeting, while we were studying English, [Mao] suddenly said, 'All the good

party members are dead. The only ones left are a bunch of zombies.'" Dr. Li was "astounded"; only later with the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, would he understand "who those 'zombies' were and realize that [Mao] would be happy to see them dead, too."

Lin Ke exposed this story as yet another invention of Dr. Li's peddled by Random House. Lin Ke went to Lushan to join Mao in early September 1961. It was a very busy meeting and he helped Mao to scan numerous documents of the meeting. In his talks with Mao during this period, Lin Ke did not notice any signs or hear any expressions of bad mood on the part of Mao. Dr. Li never attended a single session of the Lushan meetings or read a single document taken up there, so how could he conclude that there were serious differences among the party leadership then?

The purported remark by Mao on "zombies" was again fabricated to support the memoirs' contention that leaders deposed by Mao in the Cultural Revolution had been chosen as the targets of Mao's attack years before. **A habitual method used by the so-called memoirs was fabrication of statements allegedly made by Mao in private to Dr. Li alone. But those who knew Mao's style of talking would know right away that many of the quotations attributed to Mao in the memoirs could not have been his. Besides, so many witnesses are still alive today, and countless records exist, to prove Dr. Li was a liar.**

Lin Ke refutes the story in the so-called memoirs that he blocked the circulation of a Party document on which Mao allegedly wrote a derogatory

comment about Chen Yun, a Vice Chairman. Rather, Mao wrote on the margin of a report by Chen Yun after the conference of Seven Thousand Cadres in 1962: "Return to the Premier. Implement the recommendations of this report." Mao began to be unhappy about Chen Yun's views on China's economy only after his tour of parts of the country later in 1962.

Lin Ke points out that it is outlandish to imagine that he would be so audacious as to hide a Central Committee document and disobey the order to forward it to the Secretariat. Besides, it was for the confidential secretary to forward the document, and Lin Ke was not a confidential secretary. Moreover, all confidential documents of this kind were always sealed before being given to the confidential secretary for forwarding, and there was no way the confidential secretary could have opened it and read the document inside, still less to take it out and hide it.

Dr. Li's made-up story only shows that he did not have even the most rudimentary knowledge of how confidential documents were handled. If Lin Ke had done such a reckless thing, he would certainly have been punished, but there is no record of him being punished for such a serious breach of Party rules. Lin Ke left his post as Mao's secretary in 1966 at his own request. Dr. Li's account of his being dismissed in 1964 because of this "purloined document" is again a tall tale.

Lin Ke declares that "Dr. Li made up so many stories not even [Mao's] secretary [i.e., Lin Ke] had heard of." "In telling so many lies, [Dr. Li's] temerity knows no bounds." **Dr. Li did his utmost to create the impression that he was more than an ordinary**

doctor, and was with Mao when Mao attended important meetings, met with foreign dignitaries, or talked with guests or associates, had frequent private chats with Mao, and had occasion to talk in private with top Party leaders such as Zhou Enlai, Ye Jianying, and Hua Guofeng on political issues of major concern to the Party leadership. "[Dr. Li's] purpose was to dress himself up as someone in a position to have direct access to the central Party leadership, so that he could deceive gullible readers by fabricating at will statements attributed to Mao or other leaders."

Li Zhisui was just a health-maintenance person who did not have any special information about Mao. His alleged personal accounts of important meetings and political events were either taken from widely accessible published sources, based on gossip, or outright fabrications. Lin Ke notes, "There is a most peculiar thing about these memoirs: whenever Dr. Li departed from the domain of published materials and offered what was characterized as first-hand information not reported elsewhere, he was bound to make silly mistakes. Does this fact alone not provide enough food for thought?"

In sum, these so-called memoirs are nothing but a collection of deliberately crafted fabrications presented as "inside information" that Dr. Li had allegedly seen and heard, whose primary purpose was to paint an utterly negative portrait of Mao in utter disregard for historical truth. **Dr. Li in fact knew very little about politics, but his book talked so volubly about political issues. He signed his name on to things he knew nothing about on the insistence of the parties who had paid him, and**

this often landed him in a ridiculous situation where he had to make up stories.

Random House's disservice to historical truth

The Random House "memoirs" has not offered any real "inside information" or revelations at all, but on the contrary has trampled on the principle of historical veracity. It is Lin Ke's refutation that has offered a great deal of authentic materials and information never made public before, which will be found valuable by serious students of Chinese history.

Lin Ke offers this advice to China scholars: **"The entire [Random House] work is a piece of anticommunist and anti-Mao propaganda. Any research work done on Mao Zedong or the history of the People's Republic of China, if based on the fabricated accounts and wild allegations of Dr. Li, is bound to be biased and unscientific, embarking on a path that moves away from historical facts. Moreover, it may led to errors of great historical import."**

In his last chapter, Lin Ke further discusses the nature of the Random memoirs as a work of outright political propaganda catering to the needs of certain people in the West who do not wish or are afraid to face the historical truth about Mao and his important contributions. He shows how Columbia University professor Andrew Nathan, Anne Thurston who provided special editorial assistance, and Tai Hong-chao who translated the Chinese manuscript into English are particularly implicated in this massive hoax.

Andrew Nathan wrote the Foreword for the book, which constitutes a summary of the most

scurrilous contents of the book, offering statements which Dr. Li himself would find inconvenient to make. One may say that this collective work was written according to intentions revealed by Nathan's Foreword, and Thurston and Tai both made substantial alterations of the original manuscript.

Dr. Li's medical claims

While Lin Ke dwells extensively on the false memoirs' accounts of political events, Mao's longtime nursing officer, Wu Xujun, and Dr. Xu Tao take up Dr. Li as a medical colleague. They knew him well, since they were medical professionals and Li's colleagues for almost two decades. **They refute several accounts of Li purportedly improvising with Mao's dose of sleeping pills or finding that Mao had an excessive number of white blood cells in 1955, diagnosing the cause as tooth infection, and describing the extraction of Mao's teeth. These were made up to support the lie that he started working for Mao in 1955.** Dr. Li also claimed that he had examined Mao's prostate and found that Mao was infertile by examining the sperms he obtained by massaging Mao's prostate. **In fact, Mao never had his prostate examined and besides it was medically impossible to determine infertility by examining sperm obtained from massaging the prostate. Li fabricated this inside information to fabricate slanders about Mao's "licentious" sex life.** Moreover, **Li fabricated the "information" that Mao had contracted trichomonas vaginalis and spread it to countless girl friends. Mao's longtime nursing officer, Ms. Wu, and Mao's former doctor,**

Dr. Xu, went through Mao's voluminous medical files, and there was no record of such a disease.

Another graphic account of this kind pertains to Mao's eye surgery performed by Dr. Tang Youzhi in 1975. **Dr. Tang and others testify that Dr. Li was not there; at that time, Li was not working as one of Mao's physicians. Dr. Tang first examined Mao's eyes in January, 1975, in Hangzhou, and Dr. Li was not there; later, Dr. Tang moved to Zhongnanhai for eight months to care for Mao's eyes and he never saw Dr. Li there.** Mao's nursing officer at the time, Yu Yaju, testifies that Dr. Li was not one of those attending to Mao's health needs in the period from January, 1975, to April, 1976. He was not traveling with Mao either. All the accounts in the memoirs about Dr. Li providing such medical services to Mao are total fiction. Several members of Mao's medical team formed in June, 1976, who are leading experts in their respective fields, all voice low professional opinions of Dr. Li.

Mao rarely talked to Dr. Li. First of all, **Mao did not like to consult doctors.** In particular, it was **absolutely impossible for Li to have had long chats with him at night** as he claimed. If Mao had done so, the guards would certainly have known about it, but no one in Group One ever heard of such chats between Mao and Li. **"Li had very few chances to meet Mao, and he even feared to approach Mao. Instead, Li often approached Mao's bodyguards to get an impression of Mao's health condition. If there was nothing unusual, he would simply turn around and leave. When Mao fell ill and Li had to go to Mao's place...he would always ask Mao's nursing officer to keep him company. It was**

impossible that he and Mao would chat through the night."

Early in 1961, Mao gave Ms. Wu two tasks: helping him with English and reading daily the *Reference Materials* news compilation and making reports to Mao about it. In 1966, Mao also gave Wu the task of screening the small character paper published by the Red Guards. **Dr. Li fraudulently claimed that he was given all these assignments.** Li also fabricated an account of Mao talking to him about death. To refute Dr. Li's deliberately distorted accounts about Mao's attitude toward death, Ms. Wu and Dr. Xu give vivid accounts of several conversations they had with Mao pertaining to this subject.

Dr. Li claimed that Liu Shaoqi contracted tuberculosis, whereupon Mao ordered the abolition of the Central Bureau of Health, along with the system of doctors for top leaders, with the intention of denying Liu Shaoqi proper medical attention. The truth is that Liu contracted tuberculosis many years before and had recovered. In 1963, he had a relapse, but recovered by 1964. Mao ordered reform of the Central Health System after Liu had already recovered from his illness. The purpose of the reform was fully documented in records of Mao's various talks on the subject. Besides, the reform did not in any way affect health care for the central leaders, who were still assigned doctors to look after their health needs.

The Random House "memoirs" reprinted a number of photos showing Dr. Li together with Mao or in front of Mao's residence or at some events described in the book. Andrew Nathan touted this set

of "untouched" photos as definitive evidence of Li's status as a true insider. **Aside from photos per se not confirming access to inside information, they were in fact not what they were made out to be.**

Mao's longtime nursing officer Wu Xujun points out deliberate misrepresentations accompanying several photos. For example, one photo is described in the Random House book as Li swimming with Mao in the Yangtze River in the summer of 1956. But the photo had nothing to do with Mao's swimming in the Yangtze River; in fact, it was not even taken in the Yangtze River. Likewise, the first photo was described as Li posing before Mao's residence in 1954. Anyone who has worked inside Zhongnanhai could tell the picture was not taken in front of Mao's living quarters; it was taken at Liushuiyin, opposite the South Shipyard, very far from Mao's residence; the background building in the photo housed the Zhongnanhai clinic.

Dr. Li began his memoirs with the chapter, "The Death of Mao," which is made up of two stories: an alleged deathbed scene with Mao clasping Dr. Li's hand as he passed away, and a detailed account of how Dr. Li presided over the preservation of Mao's body. **Both stories are again inventions. Dr. Li was not even present when Mao passed away, nor did he ever preside over the preservation of Mao's body. These facts are all well-documented.**

Li's nocturnal chats

Mao's longtime nursing officer, Wu Xujun, and Dr. Xu, a former doctor of Mao's, with their unique knowledge of Mao as well as documents, files

and testimony from a host of witnesses, not only authoritatively expose the fraudulent nature of Dr. Li's accounts but offer a convincing and intimate portrait of Mao. As with Lin Ke's statement, they have disclosed authentic first-hand information never reported before.

Ms. Wu and Dr. Xu give an example of how Dr. Li fabricated his accounts of nocturnal chats with Mao. An entire chapter of the Random House "memoirs" is devoted to a detailed account of allegedly "the first of [Dr. Li's] countless nocturnal chats with Mao," the midnight of April 30, 1955. It reconstructed not only the "conversation" with Mao but also "exchanges" with the guard, who "told" him at the gate, "The Chairman has taken sleeping pills twice but still cannot sleep. He wants to talk to you." In the Chinese edition, Li claimed he was then led through an "adjacent corridor" to Mao's bedroom.

Ms. Wu gave this definitive refutation of Li's fable: **first of all, the adjacent corridor was not built until 1958, i.e., several years after Li's fabricated midnight chat; secondly, Mao never sent for anyone for chats when he could not fall asleep after twice taking sleeping pills. What he would do on such occasions was to have the nursing officer read him poetry in monotone or have a few casual words with the guard on duty.**

Mao's death

Nursing officer Wu and Dr. Xu produce the medical log of September 8, 1976, one day before Mao died, filed by the nurse on duty, with detailed entries roughly every half hour, from 0:00, September 8, to 16:37, the same day. This record detailed the

travails of intensive care and the end of Mao's life: incontinence, fingernails or lips turning purple because of lack of oxygen, abdominal artificial respiration repeatedly administered, changes of blood pressure, etc. But found amidst these medical details in the log of September 8, there were 11 entries of Mao reading a book or documents, for a total of two hours and fifty minutes. The last entry states simply: Read documents for 30 minutes. This is the last time Mao read documents in his life, which would end less then eight hours later.

Mao did his reading encumbered by all the intensive-care equipment such as intravenous needles in both his upper and lower limbs and tubes to his nose and throat, with a nurse holding a book or a document for him to read. Wu Xujun and Dr. Xu movingly conclude that this captures the true Mao, a leader who persevered in his devotion to his militant cause until his final moments. This portrait of Mao at the end of his life gives a sense of why hundreds of millions of Chinese people revere Mao while American "China experts" shamelessly revile him so many years after his death.

In refuting Dr. Li's fictitious account of Mao's death, Wu Xujun and Dr. Xu not only interviewed several key witnesses as well as members of Mao's medical team and Wang Dongxing, who was there that day on duty on behalf of the central leadership, to prove that Li was not present when Mao passed away at 0:10 AM, September 9, 1976. They also produce the medical team's record of the "final rescue effort," signed by all the members of the team. This record is composed of 10 entries starting at 20:05, September

8, 1976 and ending at 0:10, September 9, when Mao's heart stopped beating. It showed that **Mao fell into a coma at around 8:30 p.m. and never regained consciousness. Dr. Li's account that Mao sent for him around midnight, asked him through Zhang Yufeng whether there was still a chance to save his life, and died clasping Dr. Li's hand a few minutes later was a patently false tale peddled as historical fact by Random House.**

Dr. Xu and Wu Xujun's long refutation only takes up some of the most glaring fabrications in the "memoirs." They state that they knew Li's character flaws, but **they had never expected him to sink so low once he left China. Dr. Li collaborated with some foreigners to concoct these so-called memoirs devoted to lies and slanders. It is not a real memoir and has no value whatsoever. Mao is a great historical figure produced by the twentieth century, and the national hero of Chinese people. Those hostile to China and Mao thought they got a wonderful testimony from Li to effectively smear Mao's image, but when the true nature of Random House's hoax is exposed, their smear campaign will certainly fail.**

Nathan and his co-conspirators

It has been shown that Random House did a lot more than edit the so-called memoirs. What exactly did it do with Li's original manuscript and how did it reinvent Dr. Li's tales? Neither the original manuscript nor its English translation by Professor Tai have been made available. Professor Wills noted that "there is no mention of the location or accessibility of Dr. Li's notes or his original

manuscript." However, some conclusions can be drawn from known facts. By now it is sufficiently documented that inadmissible literary surgeries were performed which led to the innumerable discrepancies between the English edition and its supposed Chinese translation. The question is, who are the lead surgeons in this illicit operation?

Liao Liwen, the executive of China Times Publishing Co. responsible for the Chinese edition, told readers that Dr. Li repeatedly told him that among all the language editions only the Chinese edition was the "definitive version," suggesting that where the English edition departed from the Chinese edition, it did not represent what the author intended to say. Of course, neither Dr. Li's or Mr. Liao's statements can be taken at face value. It has been established that Li had no hesitation in saying different things to suit different audiences, even doctoring Nathan's Foreword and Thurston's footnotes for his purposes.

Is it possible that the handlers of the Random House edition, including the editors and the translator, did not knowingly participate in the this hoax? Discrepancies between the English and Chinese editions clearly show that they have arisen because they are elaborately crafted with different readers in mind, with the former catering to English readers, and the latter, to Chinese readers. Many accounts in the English edition suggest an understanding of the tastes and literary standards of English readership far more sophisticated than Dr. Li could possibly have.

For example, in the Chinese edition, Dr. Li repeatedly quoted Mao at length without specifying whether he was present or whether he lifted the

accounts from published sources. This would not sit well in the U.S. for presumably serious works. **That is why bogus explanations had to be offered in the English edition that Mao had permitted Dr. Li to listen in during Political Bureau meetings and that Mao's private conversations with Dr. Li later became the basis of Mao's official speeches!**

The problem with such surgical operations is that the handlers of the English edition not only changed the wording for stylistic or grammatical purposes, but also had to manufacture corresponding stories. Moreover, the specific examples cited above in the examination of the discrepancies between the Chinese and the English texts, leave little doubt that some of the most scandalous stuff were planted by the handlers of the English edition. Therefore, it must be concluded that the handlers of the English edition were the lead surgeons in many of the illegitimate operations, even if they were signed on to by Dr. Li.

Who are known to be the "editors" of the English edition and who might be shown to be knowing parties to this fraud? Epstein, as the chief editor of Random House and the boss of this project, was ultimately responsible for its final outcome. Epstein is not a China specialist and probably could not read the Chinese manuscript. But any competent editor who goes through the entire book could see that the key accounts of the book are not eyewitness accounts. Besides, Epstein is a powerful man in the publishing world. A major share of responsibility must be his for the decision to publish and promote this book as the recollections of an eyewitness. Thurston is of course a principal handler of the Random House edition. She, along with her assistant,

Xu, spent more time on this book and probably made more direct input on Tai's English translation than anybody else. In this regard, her reported request for co-authorship appears to be well justified.

Dr. Li's "Reply" sheds some light on the process of producing his "memoirs." He started writing in March 1989, finished in November, and sent a translation of the first two chapters to Random House. The translation by Tai Hung-chao was done in about one year, but Jason Epstein, the chief editor of Random House, was concerned about readability (i.e., commercial viability), so Thurston was hired to edit the manuscript. It took her and her Chinese assistant, Xu Yamin, three years to come up with the final product, longer than the time it took for the writing of the original manuscript and its translation.

Tai, the translator, sheds more light in his article, "Remembering Dr. Li Zhisui and My Translation of his Memoirs, *The Private Life Of Chairman Mao*," published in a Taiwan journal, *Docu-literature*, Vol. 4, No. 64. He revealed that Andrew Nathan was actually hired by Random House as the adviser for the project to publish the book, and that Jason Epstein, chief editor of Random House, finding Dr. Li's original manuscript too dry, "called for major surgery and substantial revising and rewriting." Three types of information were requested from Li: his family and personal history, his views on and evaluation of Mao, and many questions arising from his manuscript. Although "Dr. Li did not fully share [Epstein's] views, he reluctantly gave consent to [the changes] because it was stipulated in the contract that [Random House] had **the right to add or delete information**."

Tai further revealed that "on the recommendation of Andrew Nathan, Anne Thurston, who studies Chinese literature and history, was hired as assistant editor, paid by Dr. Li," and that Thurston had a series of talks with Dr. Li to gather...information while assisting in editing/revision work." Tai approvingly noted that "no one could have expected that it would take [Thurston] two or three years to complete her task," but her editing and revision work was "very successful," turning a purported historical tract into a work of "*literature*" - actually, to be more precise, fiction.

The acknowledgments section of the book only mentioned in a general way that Nathan had been involved in the publication of the book from the beginning. Nathan was involved in more than the production of the book: he is also its leading cheerleader and source of "scholarly" certification. Moreover, he is also the leader in making use of the slanders in the book to denounce Mao and Chinese socialism. In fact, his Foreword is even more scurrilous and outrageous, if that were possible, than the book itself.

Nathan, who knows Epstein well, is a China specialist, and got Thurston involved in the project. His role in the editorial process is not officially recognized in the acknowledgments section of the book, which does not elaborate in what capacity he had been involved "from the beginning." But Tai named him as an adviser of Epstein, and other reviewers described him as "helping edit the book." If Nathan had been paid to help edit the book and his editorial role was left out in the acknowledgments

section, then there was a deliberate attempt to cover up that role.

If the behind the scenes involvement of Nathan in the production of this book is not exactly clear, his role in promoting it as a genuine eyewitness account is on record. Nathan told Bernstein of *The New York Times*: "It boils down to the fact that [Thurston] who worked with [Dr. Li] on the book did a tremendous amount of checking." But Thurston knew that Li was less than honest or reliable precisely because of her checking. In his Foreword, Nathan also certified that "official and semi-official works corroborate many details in [Li's] account but differ from his in leaving out [embarrassing] aspects of the story" of Mao's life. But **the controversy concerns not those parts of Li's memoirs that were in line with other accounts, but precisely his allegedly unique inside stories not found in other works and which therefore could not possibly be corroborated by them. Nathan's talk of corroboration can therefore only be disingenuous.**

Nathan also informed the readers in his Foreword that "untouched film footage and photos" and "reliable sources" confirmed Li's identity as Mao's doctor. Nathan was referring to several photos showing Mao and Dr. Li together, which were reprinted in the book. But **Li Zhisui's having served as one of Mao's doctors was not the issue; only Nathan attempted to make it so. There was no need to prove it by photos. Again the intent to mislead is manifest. Nathan tried to tell the readers that since Dr. Li was a doctor of Mao's, he must therefore have had the kind of unparalleled access to and intimate knowledge of Mao as he**

claimed to have, and that therefore his alleged inside stories and scandals were true. Nathan surely knew that this was a spurious argument. For example, no responsible scholar or journalist would accept unquestioningly the charges of betrayal of atomic secrets made by Supadlov against Oppenheimer, Fermi and others merely on the ground that his KGB identity was confirmed and that therefore he could be presumed to know the truth.

Nathan also stated in his Foreword that "apparently, there has been a central directive to treat [Li] as a non-person." Nathan brought up the idea of a central directive to impress readers about the important role Li played in Mao's inner circle. He did not have any evidence to suggest that Dr. Li had played any noteworthy role in Mao's public or private life or any special relationship with Mao beyond having been one of Mao's doctors. All the arguments Nathan adduced to support Li's fabrications about Mao and the alleged special relationship between Li and Mao are purely and simply bogus, which only serve to confirm Nathan's complicity. As a "China specialist," he should know that a primary care doctor could not be automatically presumed to know what Dr. Li claimed to know. Thus **Nathan's talk of corroboration, "untouched photos," "apparent central directive," etc. all constitute a deliberate attempt to deceive readers.**

Nathan's Foreword has provoked a particular angry response from critics of the book. Indeed, it is an extreme example of shoddy scholarship, marked by an overflow of bias, open malice and total disregard for basic standards of intellectual honesty. Nathan has always been known for blurring the line

between scholarship and politics. But this Foreword has gone much farther than just blurring the line. So many personal slanders it made against Mao can be documented to be unfounded. Indeed, Nathan went beyond Dr. Li's claims in the book, such that even Li was embarrassed enough of the Foreword to alter it in the Chinese edition. Moreover, unlike others who also used the slanders in the book to attack Mao, Nathan had the distinction of engaging in the very manufacturing of the slanders himself. This raises the matter of the "memoirs" being tailored to the designs of Nathan, the unacknowledged co-editor.

There is no direct evidence to establish the specific nature of others' participation in preparing the Chinese edition. But one special grouping of overseas Chinese writers stand out as most energetic supporters of Dr. Li. They are anti-Mao Chinese "dissidents" now operating in the U.S., who threw in their lot with Zhao Zhiyang, the former Party General Secretary, during the political crisis and people's uprising in 1989. Among the Chinese writers who have commented on the book in the Chinese media, some of these "dissidents," including Liu Bingyan, Su Xaokang and Su Shaozhi have been most vociferous in cheering the book and most abusive in attacking Mao. It is perhaps no coincidence that many of these dissidents in exile are connected with China specialists like Nathan, Yu, and Link not only by politics but also by money. The anti-Mao dissidents have received stipends or grants from Nathan's China and Constitutionalism Project at the East Asia Institute of Columbia University or from Yu's and Link's Modern China Study Group at Princeton University. They publish their views in *China Spring*

and *Beijing Spring* magazines, organs of two dissident groups for whom Nathan is an adviser.

The book's diatribe against Zhou Enlai brings to mind another scurrilous work. A little before the publication of Dr. Li's memoirs, *The Burden of Calling You Father*, by Ai Pei, a pen name, came out. This book was hyped up by a magazine published by dissidents, of which Su Xiaokang was then chief editor, as the authentic autobiography of the author who was alleged to be the illegitimate daughter of Zhou Enlai. There was even a photo of her to prove her resemblance to Zhou.

The book created a sensation. Was she or was she not Zhou Enlai's daughter? Supporters and detractors argued endlessly in newspapers and magazines in Taiwan, Hongkong and elsewhere. The author became an instant celebrity, giving many interviews. The publicity dragged on for months until it was finally proven a fraud. Some of the exiled dissident writers were very clear about their intention to use this book to destroy Zhou Enlai's reputation for moral rectitude. They declared that Chinese communists must be exposed as hypocrites.

Liu Bingyan disclosed in an article he wrote on Dr. Li's death that he knew of Li's project as early as 1988. Li had claimed that he did not write the book before 1989, and he said in his interview with Jin Zhong, "that I was working on this book was disclosed to others primarily by Thurston. I never told any one that I was working on this project." Although neither Liu Bingyan or Dr. Li are known for the accuracy of their statements, Liu's revelation did suggest that he or some others in his circle of

dissidents were consulted before Dr. Li began working on his manuscript.

The title of the piece by Liu Bingyan, "I Wish to See Emulators," is itself very revealing. It expressed the wish that the handsome reward to Dr. Li would inspire more storytellers in the future, including this time some *real* insiders. Liu obviously believes the Chinese saying, "If the reward is handsome enough, some bold ones will step forward." From what has transpired since he expressed this wish, Mr. Liu must have been very disappointed. Nobody who really knew Mao has come forward to "corroborate" Li's stories. On the contrary, many real insiders have stepped forward to attest that Li is an out-and-out liar and that Random House has perpetrated a big hoax.

A network of cultural-imperialist propaganda is clearly discernible. Segments of the cultural elite, connected to foundations, the media establishment and prestigious academic institutions, dispense grants and book contracts on which depend the livelihood of dissident writers or "inside information" peddlers. Together they form a dformidable propaganda machine which shapes mainstream discourse on China by churning out stories of sexual misconduct and cannibalism to smear the Chinese nation.

Cultural-imperialist mindset

Nathan not only did his utmost to insult Mao, but treated his protégé, Li Zhisui, with condescension and contempt as well. Nathan's Foreword praises Dr. Li's "foreign tincture": his "frank, round, slightly smiling face stands out from the rows of stony-faced retainers in the group photographs" of Mao's staff;

and "his open expression, soft cheeks and neat clothes betray him as the one who came back from the West." In the next passage, he called Dr. Li a limited observer of history, who had "a certain willingness to look away from evil." His attitude is akin to that of a colonial master extolling and at the same time disparaging his servant. It is of course the master's attitude that most of all betrays a blindness to evil. In the case of Nathan, he was obviously not capable of comprehending the evil of cultural imperialism.

The publication of this book and its accompanying media hype are a sad commentary on how little intellectuals like Andrew Nathan, some styling themselves liberals, have really changed in their Eurocentrist and sexist outlook. There is, to be sure, more delicacy in public discourse in the U.S. about domestic race issues or women's issues than before the 1960's. For example, Nathan would probably not make such blatantly offensive remarks about African American women, as he did in his Foreword about Chinese women, nor would he openly disparage the national character or intelligence of African American people because he disliked their militant leaders. The selective political sensitivity of so many eminent representatives of the media and academic elite like Epstein, Nathan, Mirsky, Bernstein, et al. shows that their racist and sexist mind set has not really changed.

By now it is clear that Jason Epstein, chief editor of Random House, *New York Times* journalist Richard Bernstein, and Professors Nathan, Link, and Yu and their gang of exiled Chinese dissidents have, in their frenzy to revile Mao, propagated a despicable work of disinformation. There are those who were

taken in by the Random House "memoirs" because of insufficient knowledge of who Dr. Li really was and Nathan's fictitious claim of corroboration by other sources. But such an excuse is not available to the Ivy League professors Link, Yu, and Nathan, all supposed China specialists. Like Nathan's, statements made by Link and Yu also suggest a deliberate attempt to mislead readers.

Professor Yu read both Chinese and English editions, and he criticized minor discrepancies relating to Deng Xiaoping and Edgar Snow, but he was totally silent about the far more serious and numerous instances of discrepancies in accounts relating to Mao. Link's review article, "Someone Else" (*Times Literary Supplement*, Oct. 28, 1994), in an attempt to prove Dr. Li's "authenticity," stated that "the government of Beijing, embarrassed by his revelations, has refused to acknowledge his identity," but that "it is, in fact, well known that Li was Mao's doctor." There was never any attempt by anyone to deny that Dr. Li had worked as one of Mao's doctors. Professor Link created this issue of official denial of Dr. Li's "identity" to mislead readers. He proceeded to inform readers that "there are only a few other first-hand accounts of Mao in print: two were written by women who were Mao's girlfriends (Zhang Yufeng and Meng Jingyun); and one by a bodyguard (Li Yingqiao)"; and "on the whole they confirm Li's portrait." Of course, **Link, like Nathan, never explained how they confirmed it, since it was precisely Dr. Li's sex scandals, the heart of the Random House memoirs, which were also claimed by Random House to be new and heretofore unpublished. Thus Professor Link, like Nathan**

and Yu, deliberately attempted to disinform. The process of production of Dr. Li's false memoirs is actually quite the other way around: Random House tried to have it copy wherever possible from published first-hand accounts and then spiked it with fabricated sex stories in order to promote and sell it.

No follower of the Chinese literary scene could possibly have failed to take notice of the boom of "Mao literature" since 1989, which is by any measure phenomenal. And the most prominent part of this boom consists of first-hand accounts by people who had personal contacts with Mao. The March 1996 issue of *China Quarterly* has a special review essay devoted to "new trends in Mao literature from China." It reviews 28 books, which represent only a fraction of the books on Mao which have been published in the recent boom, and makes special note of first-hand accounts by numerous "reminiscing bodyguards, doctors, secretaries, interpreters, nurses, photographers, pilots, train attendants, and comrades in arms," who "have taken up the pen to recall their encounters with Chairman Mao." It is indeed noteworthy that these same people who gave first-hand accounts about Mao have come out to denounce Dr. Li as a liar.

As for Professor Link's high marks for Dr. Li's book as the "best first-hand account," what makes this book stand out in comparison to the first-hand accounts recalling personal contacts with Mao that have come out in China in recent years is its lack of details characteristic of first-hand information, except in the area of Mao's health, and even here Mao's longtime nursing officer and former doctor have shown Li to have lied. Dr. Li either gave some

malicious interpretation to matters reported elsewhere or offered a new "story" in such abbreviated fashion that it did not sound like a first-hand account at all.

Many of the accounts in the book and the statements by Nathan, Mirsky, Link and others would have constituted libel, had they been made concerning American citizens, because of the clear evidence of malice and deliberate attempts to slander by false statements. Besides disingenuousness and outright falsehood, statements by Nathan and others betray a cultural imperialist mindset that reeks of contempt for the Chinese people. Their statements are found outrageous by many Chinese not only because they have smeared Mao, but also because they have insulted the Chinese people as a whole. Mao remains a revered historical figure for hundreds of millions of Chinese people, more respected than any other Chinese political leader, past or present. It is sheer arrogance to assume that the views and feelings of the Chinese people about Chinese history can be dismissed as of little weight compared with those of a handful of arrogant and dishonest American professors and journalists.

Ian Buruma in his *New Yorker* review asserted that Mao's China differed with Hitler's Germany only in scale, that every Chinese, "no matter how far from the center of power" was turned "into either a toady or a cynic," and that most Chinese were involved in acts of cruelty during the Cultural Revolution. Likewise, Mirsky, in *The New York Review of Books*, wondered how such a "monster" as Mao could "through the skillful use of propaganda and terror, have stayed in power" for so long. He found an explanation by quoting Aristotle: "Those who are

angry at things they should be angry at are deemed fools." He ended his review with the conclusion that "it would, indeed, be foolish not to be angry [at] the most destructive tyrant in recorded history." Obviously such statements are not just about Mao; they are sweeping statements about the Chinese people as whole and their alleged moral weakness and stupidity.

Nathan's Foreword topped all in malice. He declared that good-looking young women were recruited all over China and "served to [Mao's] order like food"; and that "some of those chosen introduced their sisters." Nathan and others try to promote a stereotypical view of China by refraction through an Eurocentricist prism: Chinese people have habitually submitted themselves to the absolute power of emperors who always had hundreds if not thousands of concubines; Mao was the new emperor; and the Chinese people have always accepted despotism and tyranny submissively. Nathan attributed this to the "Confucian unwillingness of [people around Mao] to confront their superior."

Political and historical context

To put the Random House book in political and historical perspective, some general understanding of the controversy surrounding the political and historical evaluation of Mao's legacy is necessary. The stop-and-go but inexorable march led by Deng Xiaoping away from Mao's revolutionary socialism began in 1979 under the banner of "reform and opening up." Deng's return to power and the subsequent changes engineered by him and his followers were accompanied by increasing clamors

for demaoification within the Communist Party. Though there was resistance, it was not because supporters of Mao's revolutionary socialism remained in leadership positions, for Deng had gotten rid of them and brought back to power prominent leaders who shared Deng's fate of being brought down as capitalist roaders during the Cultural Revolution.

Deng closed the chapter on the Cultural Revolution by a declaration of the Central Committee that the Cultural Revolution was a "historical disaster." But demaoification never materialized as an official campaign to denounce Mao, unlike Khrushchev's destalinization. The Central Committee issued a document which gave the official evaluation of Mao as seventy percent positive and thirty percent negative, a compromise to forestall a bitter, open clash on Mao. But for a number of years, demaoification was effectively underway, mostly by political gossip and back-alley information denigrating Mao. This process was not entirely orchestrated from above nor was it entirely spontaneous. But many of the leaders that dominated the post-Mao scene in the early 1980's had every reason to support, or at least acquiesce in, the repudiation of Mao's revolutionary legacy, for they had been humiliated or otherwise suffered as a result of the Cultural Revolution.

The post-Mao reforms led to radical departures both in theory and in practice from basic features of socialism. Opening up China to the West as energetically advocated by Deng and his followers gave rise to the view among large segments of the population that thirty years of Chinese socialism were a colossal failure in comparison with the developed

capitalism of the West and Japan. Many were convinced the best path for the development of China was to emulate the West and allow China to be transformed across the board by opening up to influences from the West not only economically, but also culturally and politically. Anti-Mao and pro-Western views became the mainstream among the younger generations and influential intellectuals. Along with broad changes in values and in the climate of opinion in Chinese society, Mao's image reached a low point by the mid-1980's. Not surprisingly, the thrust of back-alley gossip smearing Mao's image, which ran rampant in China in the early 1980's, was essentially the same as in Dr. Li's memoirs: that Mao was a womanizer and a suspicious, ruthless tyrant whose actions were motivated by a desire to maintain his absolute dictatorship.

But it did not take long for the society at large to feel the pains and ills attendant to Deng's headlong drive for economic development by whatever means, particularly those that promised short-term results, as reflected in his famous line that a cat which catches mice is a good cat regardless of whether it is black or white. By the summer of 1988, acute tensions in economic, social, political and other spheres could no longer be contained under the slogan "to get rich is glorious." People in general had become increasingly disenchanted; in particular, they were angry at the rampant corruption on the part of political leaders whose overt and covert involvement in business deals gave rise to *guan dao*, literally, "business deals by government officials." People's anger was directed at the children of top leaders who were getting rich fast on the strength of their family connections and status,

most notably, the children of Deng Xiaoping and Zhao Zhiyang. Many student and intellectual activists, however, saw more capitalism and political pluralism based on the Western model as the solution, though this in itself had little appeal to the majority of the working population.

In April, 1989, student unrest broke out in many cities calling for more democracy and an end to official corruption, which developed into a broad-based spontaneous mass movement on an unprecedented scale. It has been misleadingly described by Western media as essentially a movement for democracy as commonly understood in the West. Despite the political inclinations of the student leaders, however, the thrust of the movement by then was no longer the original student demand for "dialogue" or greater "freedom of speech and the press." Most people joined the movement because of anger at official corruption and their sense of justice. They saw it as a struggle against an increasingly corrupt ruling class which had tried to ruthlessly put down the bold and just actions of students. The mass protest reflected not so much the people's demand for Western-style democracy or freedom as their yearnings for a just and equal society.

Western media failed to see that the Chinese people's movement in 1989, in its essential aspects, was not a pro-Western/pro-"democracy" movement embodying the leanings of part of the intelligentsia; it articulated, rather, the crisis of the pro-market, pro-West policies of Deng Xiaoping. The Western media's bias prevented them from seeing strong evidence to the contrary: the Mao revival. They belatedly took notice of this, but by trivializing it as

some kind of nostalgia or curious interest in a historical figure, they missed its political significance. The Mao revival is a protest against Deng's pro-Western policies, a reaction to the problems that have arisen from mimicking the West and putting profits ahead of people. Not only does it have highly political causes, but also major political implications for China today and in the future.

The renewed interest in and respect for Mao can be shown by two sets of figures. Polls of urban residents on "the most respected persons dead or alive" have shown a dramatic turn around in Mao's popularity, which has gone up from around 10% to consistently around 40% in recent years, way ahead of Zhou Enlai or Deng Xiaoping at less than 10%, who have alternated as number 2 and 3. This polling did not include the majority of the Chinese population, the peasants, who are overwhelmingly loyal supporters of Mao.

The number of visitors who have traveled to Mao's birth place, Shaoshan, a small village in Hunan Province, to visit the house where he was born tells the same story: the number of visitors dropped to 230,000 in 1982, the lowest figured ever recorded; it has steadily gone up every year after 1982, and the rate of growth increased dramatically beginning in 1987. It reached 1.6 million in 1991, by which time the Mao revival was in full swing. This phenomenon of the Mao revival, dubbed "the Look-For-Mao Zedong Fever" by Chinese journalists, was also manifested in the record sales of anything having to do with Mao, including biographies, magazines featuring accounts of Mao's private life, music albums, anthologies of Mao's political writings and

poems, Mao buttons, book clubs and college campus study groups on Mao's political philosophy, and so forth.

One aspect is particularly significant: the dramatic change in attitude toward Mao among the tens of millions of former Red Guards between 35 to 50 years of age and the most active social group in China today. They used to be overwhelmingly hostile to Mao in the late 1970's and early 1980's. At that time they shared the feeling of having been deceived by Mao and of being victims of the Cultural Revolution, for most of them had been sent to the countryside to work as peasants, which they had willingly done out of revolutionary idealism. Many of them now speak proudly of their experiences in the countryside. Some have gone so far as to declare that the Cultural Revolution was not altogether a disaster. The consensus of denouncing the Cultural Revolution as an absolute disaster has thus been called into question. This can not but be viewed with alarm by anti-Mao forces in and outside of China. They needed to smear the name of Mao in order to counter the Mao revival.

The centennial anniversary of Mao's birth was marked by many spontaneous activities to pay tribute to Mao's memory inside China, while outside China the anti-Mao forces also marked Mao's centennial. There was the anti-Mao BBC special program where Dr. Li made his debut. A book entitled *Mao and his Women* was published in Taiwan, whose author(s) used a pen name, Jin Fuzi. That book offered many more "juicy details" on Mao's sex life than Dr. Li's. And of course there are the false memoirs by Dr. Li. In contrast to the forces on the right, the more left-

leaning scholars in the West do not seem to have adequately grasped the implications of the Mao revival in China.

Mao and women

Mao's attitude and conduct toward women is a legitimate subject of public discourse and important for the understanding and evaluation of Mao as a historical and public figure. Mao's contribution to gender equality in China is well documented. The private Mao that has come out in the recent boom of Mao literature is consistent with the public Mao: a passionate man genuinely concerned about the lot of the oppressed, in particular the oppression suffered by women and gender equality.

From Mao's early youth, he felt strongly about the oppression of Chinese woman under the feudal system of male supremacy. In his private moments, in casual conversation with his staff, or when watching a drama performance, his sympathies always were on the side of the women who rebelled against male domination. There is no authentic first-hand account of Mao's private life and nothing in Mao's own writings or correspondence that suggests he ever expressed any views tainted with sexism.

Contrary to the prevailing impression in the U.S. that Mao's private life was not known, more first-hand accounts have been given about Mao's casual conversations, unconventional personal habits and daily life, with the recent boom in Mao literature in China, than about any other leader in Chinese history. And this zeal to dig out anything connected with Mao for publication is mostly driven by the market.

Mao's life of unprecedented revolutionary struggle and leadership did not leave room for much of a private life in the conventional sense of the word - indeed, not even after his death, with Random House and Andrew Nathan trying their worst to do a job on him. But just as in his public life, the private Mao was also a rebel against the conventions of male-dominated class society. His politics were closer to today's feminists than any important political leader except perhaps Lenin.

Some people have rushed to attack Mao's relation to women on the basis of the false accounts of a renegade and scoundrel. But it is precisely in the field of women's liberation that China under Mao's militant leadership registered the proudest record in world history. In a relatively short period, China not only achieved formal gender equality in the areas of political and civil rights, but long-standing social ills rooted in male domination such as prostitution and concubinage disappeared altogether. The formal equality and victories in individual battles never were enough for Mao, who believed in continuing struggle in all major areas of society to root out oppression and inequity, including in the area of women's liberation.

Under Deng Xiaoping, the giant strides toward gender equality both in theory and in practice have been reversed. Mao, however, left a powerful legacy which remains a source of inspiration for all who genuinely care about gender equality. Mao's contribution to the cause of women's liberation in China and the impressive advances of women in Mao's China are inseparably linked with his words: Women hold up half the sky. His struggle showed that it is truly possible to eradicate gender discrimination

by radical, militant action. Random House's attempt to create a consensus that Mao was no different from the ancient Chinese emperors in indulging in the imperial pleasures provided by a harem of concubines is a cynical perversion of historical truth. It is intended to discourage those who really care about gender equality from looking for inspiration from Mao's legacy.

World information order

The publication and media promotion of this book also speak volumes about our times: it vividly illustrates the way information and opinion are being manufactured, processed and disseminated in the present world information order, a profoundly unsettling aspect of which is the unprecedented concentration of power and wealth in the hands of private multinational media corporations in developed countries of the north and in the U.S. in particular.

In this respect, Random House and publications like *The New York Times* and *U.S. News & World Report* have done something U.S. government agencies could not match. That they could launch a worldwide anti-Mao disinformation campaign and get American "China specialists" to sing in concert the praises of this fraud is eloquent testimony to their power. The private sector, including both for-profit and not-for-profit activities by multinational media companies, private foundations and other organizations based in the U.S., is playing a more important and effective role in regulating information flow to and from Third World countries and shaping the perceptions and values of people. Indeed, there appears to be a general trend of

increasing privatization of the traditional role of the state in the area of international information.

Moreover, the lines between the academic, commercial and political appear to be increasingly fuzzy. Nathan's conduct is a specific example. A group of Chinese dissidents was the leading promoter of Li Zhisui's book in overseas Chinese media, many of them affiliated with Columbia University research projects under Nathan's tutelage, and in Princeton University under Professors Yu and Link.

The money for the Princeton project reportedly came largely from the George Soros Foundation. Soros has been described as a one-man State Department. He has set up various foundations in Eastern European countries and former Soviet republics. He also set up the Foundation for Reform and Opening up of China, now defunct, which supported a network of intellectuals and political operatives serving as a think tank for the former Chinese Communist Party general secretary Zhao Zhiyang who was deposed in the power struggle in connection with the Tiananmen demonstrations in 1989. Soros has declared that his mission is to save the world from totalitarianism by bringing "democracy" and the market economy to socialist countries.

Nathan's project at Columbia University, on the other hand, was largely funded by the Chiang Chingkuo Foundation, set up in memory of the late Kuomintang leader and son of Chiang Kaishek. Most of the Chinese dissidents in exile in the U.S. are hacks belonging to the faction headed by Zhao Zhiyang, and they command little respect in the overseas Chinese community and still less inside China. They are

defectors, and are paid for being such: like Dr. Li, they can bear witness to the evils of communism and Chinese nationalism.

For example, Su Xiaokang in Princeton, wrote that the Random House book not only "pulverized" Mao but turned him into a "pile of shit." He was credited in the editor's note for not only ridiculing Mao but also mocking "an entire generation of idealistic Chinese followers of Mao." Su had previously acquired notoriety for his anti-Chinese narrative in the Yellow River Elegy television series shown in China in 1988 with the blessings of Zhao Ziyang. He declared that Chinese culture is too moribund to be revitalized on its own; he exhorted viewers not to lament the yellow color of their skin which could not be changed, but to let the Chinese national soul be born again through the baptism of all-round Western influence. The main metaphor of the TV program was that the Yellow River, the mother of the Chinese nation, is already dead; it is time to embrace the Blue Ocean, the symbol of the West in the TV series. No wonder the George Soros Foundation was impressed.

Power relations in the existing world information order are marked by outrageous inequity. Major information powerhouses like Random House or BBC can routinely disseminate international propaganda and be assured of enormous world impact, while no Third World entities could possibly get their messages across with remotely comparable effectiveness.

Many people in the Third World have long resented the inequality in the existing world information order and abuse of information power by

the state-corporate nexus of the developed countries. But in the face of this awesome propaganda power, Third World people find themselves powerless to mount an effective defense or counter attack with any realistic chance of setting the record straight.

This has given rise to the call for the establishment of a new international information order. More radical commentators have denounced the monopoly of information power as cultural imperialism or media imperialism. Indeed, the collective practices of multinational media giants and international cultural managers call to mind many of the nefarious features long associated with imperialism. Media giants habitually arrogate to themselves the right to be the final arbiters on other countries' politics, history and morality.

Nationalist or anti-imperialist leaders in the Third World are routinely vilified or demonized, unsavory figures or non-credible political opposition forces often dressed up as pro-democracy or human rights champions, and the culture and history of Third World countries often viewed with Eurocentric stereotypes and biases. These media giants proclaimed Gorbachev a world hero and Castro a butcher of the Cuban people, with the supreme imperial arrogance that their opinions are far more weighty than those of the vast number of people of these two countries. They pronounce Mao a monster on the basis of the trumped-up accounts of one man whose credibility should have been suspect in the first place, while totally disregarding the respect for Mao by hundreds of millions of Chinese people.

Another egregious aspect of the collective practices of the multinational media monopolies and

leading international cultural managers is that their awesome power is exercised with not even minimum accountability. Their activities are checked by no legal constraints nor guided by consistently applied moral standards, but largely based on their perception of the interests of the state-corporate nexus of which they are now a central part. They assume no responsibility whatsoever for the consequences suffered by Third World people from their activities. They trumpet the reactionary economic "reforms" by way of shock therapy in former socialist countries and International Monetary Fund-imposed structural adjustment programs in developing countries. When disastrous consequences ensue, they blame "conservatives," i.e., progressives or nationalists.

Government officials and agencies have had to tread more carefully when commenting on other countries' history or current affairs. Recently, a Japanese official was forced to resign because of the protest of South Koreans against his remark that the Japanese did good things for Koreans when they ruled Korea as a colony. Multinational media enterprises, however, can hide behind the banner of freedom of speech and almost always get away with the most outrageous slanders. It is this total lack of accountability for irresponsible information activities and conduct that prompted Prime Minister Mahatir of Malaysia to propose in the U.N. an international law which would make it possible for responsible parties to be tried in the courts of countries victimized by international media. In any case, there is certainly a need to seriously address the questions of accountability of international media and the proper balance between responsibility and freedom. "Free

competition" of ideas and information in the market place without addressing unequal power relations represents not justice in civilized societies, but savage injustice according to the law of the jungle.

The interest of Random House and BBC in the "dark side" of Mao's private life is not a matter of their concern about Mao's morality. There is no such concern or interest by the big media in the sexual mores, political practices, or human rights record of Suharto of Indonesia, the King of Saudi Arabia, or any number of pro-U.S. tyrants and butchers. On the other hand, to demonize anti-imperialist leaders is a common practice by the state-corporate nexus. As Noam Chomsky points out, "radical nationalist leaders are intolerable, when they appear succeeding in terms that might be meaningful to oppressed and suffering people." That Mao's revolutionary legacy is intolerable to the West shows that it remains meaningful to the Chinese and other people who feel oppressed by the present world order and are not willing to accept their assigned role in it.

PART TWO

An Open Letter on the so-called Memoirs of Mao's Physician

by Chinese in the U.S. and Taiwan [8]

The so-called memoirs of a physician of Mao Zedong, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, was published in English and Chinese, respectively, by Random House and China Times (Taipei) last fall. It received prominent attention in U.S. big media, including front page coverage in *The New York Times*, extensive excerpts in *U.S. News and World Report*, and prominent book reviews in other prestigious mainstream publications. Andrew Nathan of Columbia University was closely involved in the publication of the book and wrote its foreword.

The book portrays socialist China under Mao's leadership in a completely negative light, and peddles purported inside stories and sex scandals about Mao.

Though in the early 1980's criticizing Mao was the fashion in China, he has remained the most revered figure in the hearts and minds of the Chinese people. If he is revered by many and reviled by a few, it is hardly on account of his private life.

Personal attacks usually do not merit reply. But they have riveted the attention of the U.S. media. The so-called exclusive inside stories have been

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[8]This is a revised edition of an open letter by Chinese in the U.S. and Taiwan, which was first published on February 18, 1995 by *The Asian American Times*, a Chinese language weekly paper in Queens, New York, and subsequently by other newspapers in Hong Kong and Taiwan.

recounted with gusto in media reports and scholarly reviews by the likes of Andrew Nathan. They all spout a common theme: Mao was a ruthless, sex-crazed feudal despot and Chinese communism is a dictatorship that devours its own people.

On the basis of our readings of the English and Chinese texts, and in particular the revealing differences or discrepancies between them which can not be explained by legitimate editorial or translation needs, we, the undersigned, have concluded that the main accusations against Mao in the book are either products of wild imagination or outright fabrication, malicious personal attacks and slanders well beyond the normal confines of the expression of personal opinions or observations.

Andrew Nathan's involvement in the publication and promotion of this book flouts the basic norms of academic probity and we have reasons to question whether he has in fact knowingly participated in an endeavor that can only be described as intellectual fraud.

Moreover, we are of the view that the widely disseminated slanders and fallacies trotted out by certain China scholars and journalists, saturated with stereotypes of the Chinese nation and society habitually found in Eurocentrist narratives, have not only smeared Mao's image but also insulted the Chinese people. Andrew Nathan's foreword is a particularly offensive text which oozes with cultural imperialism's contempt for the Chinese people.

On the threshold of the 21st century, China is entering a period marked by choices of world-historical magnitude. The opinion whipped up by Li Zhisui, Andrew Nathan and company is by no means

isolated or merely anecdotal; it raises questions that need to be addressed by all who are concerned about the dignity and future of the Chinese people and Third World people in general. Here then are some of our considered views

How much truth is there in Dr. Li's accusations and attacks against Mao? A clue can be found in the way the putative scandals are presented. While a selling point for the book is the disclosure of lurid "scandals" in Mao's private life, all that the so-called scandals amount to are laconic allegations about Mao's sexual life interspersed in Dr. Li's reminiscences with no substantiation or corroboration. It is such unsubstantiated assertions that the mainstream media have picked up and eagerly touted as scandals.

For example, the book repeatedly mentions that Mao enjoyed ballroom dancing and often danced with young females who were members of cultural work troupes. This in itself is no news for it has been reported elsewhere on many occasions; but the author did not stop there, and went on to regale the readers with his "insider" information that many of those pretty, young ladies had sexual relations with Mao. Any responsible author making such shocking revelations would document their account with facts and details. Dr. Li. has not followed this practice of responsible scholarship.

Throughout the book, Dr. Li gives the minutest account of anything he witnessed, or even merely heard of, no matter how trivial, that had anything to do with Mao, sometimes in incredible detail; the sexual mores of other figures such as Li Yinqiao and Deng Xiaoping are illustrated with far

great detail. Why does he skimp over details when it comes to the shocking and tantalizing revelations about the central figure's sex life? The explanation can only be that they did not have any basis in fact.

A close reading of the Chinese and the English editions is very revealing. The two editions match in general but when it comes to the sexual life of Mao, supposedly the most intriguing part of the book, significant discrepancies appear. Here are a few examples.

One "scandalous" anecdote relished by the media is about Mao transmitting his venereal disease to his sexual partners. In fact, neither edition dares make the outright assertion that Mao had venereal disease. There is only an indirect reference to VD in the English edition: "with so much sexual activity, venereal disease was practically inevitable" (p.363). The book then goes on to describe Mao as having trichomonas vaginalis - which in any case is not a venereal disease - which he allegedly transmitted to a host of sexual partners. But in the Chinese edition, there is no suggestion that Mao had venereal disease.

In his foreword, Andrew Nathan decided to assert directly that Mao had caused "the spread of venereal infection among his female companions." In the Chinese translation of this foreword, Dr. Li found it necessary to do a reverse spin: Andrew Nathan's direct reference to venereal disease was struck out; instead, the Chinese text of Nathan's foreword now states that Mao had caused "the spread of trichomonas vaginalis among his female companions."

Why the removal of any reference to venereal disease? Because trichomonas vaginalis is caused by a parasite and communicable easily through clothing

and it is not a venereal disease. If Mao had VD, Dr. Li should have been able to name the disease. Not having the nerve to openly lie about Mao's having VD, he had to alter his own memoirs and Nathan's foreword for the Chinese edition. The VD claim in the English edition was fabricated to create media publicity for the book and to smear the name of Mao.

The English edition claims that Mao adopted the Daoist practice of complementing *yang* with *yin* via sex. In the Chinese edition, the book states in its typically scant fashion: "Mao became a practitioner of Daoism then [when he was 67]: sex was intended to prolong life and not just for pleasure" (p.343). That is all there is to the sensationalist story of Mao practicing Daoist sexual methods. No mention of *yin* or *yang* or any other details.

In the English edition, this sentence is slightly altered: "It was then that [Mao] became an adherent of Daoist *sexual practices*, which gave him an excuse to pursue sex not only for pleasure but to extend his life" (italics added) Then the "editors" of the English version proceed to add two entirely new sentences that are not in the Chinese edition: "He was happiest and most satisfied with several young women simultaneously sharing his bed. He encouraged his sexual partners to introduce him to others for shared orgies, allegedly in the interest of his longevity and strength" (p.358).

On the same page, the "editors" also insert a long footnote, amplifying the term "Daoist Sexual Practice" with the explanation how *yin* could be made to complement *yang*. There is another reference to group sex in the English edition: "[It was at] the height of the Cultural Revolution, that Mao was

sometimes in bed with three, four or even five women simultaneously" (p. 517) .

There is no explanation of who saw this or under what circumstances it was observed. The Chinese edition makes no mention whatsoever of group sex for the simple reason that the Chinese would see through the lie. Likewise, the Chinese Edition does not make the assertion that Mao also liked to have sex with men as is alleged in the English edition (p. 358-359).

On a separate occasion, Dr. Li also demonstrated his penchant for making farfetched statements in English which he would not have the audacity to make in Chinese. When interviewed by BBC, Dr. Li, in alluding to Mao's peasant origin, asserted that the only pastime for the Chinese peasants was sex. In an attempt to offer some insight on Mao's sex life, such a statement, instead, offers ample insight into the mentality of Dr. Li and Random House itself.

A comparison of the two editions brings out something unprecedented in book publishing. In the English edition, Li Zhisui is listed as the author and Tai Hung-chao as the translator; on the cover of the Chinese edition, Li Zhisui is the author, Tai Hung-chao, the English translator, and Li Zhisui, the Chinese translator, without specifying which edition is the original.

If the original is in English, why did it need to be translated into English? If the original is in Chinese, why translate it into Chinese? And how does one account for the numerous discrepancies between the two editions? We believe that there's more to the book than simply personal memoirs.

As pointed out in the acknowledgments in the English edition, Andrew Nathan was involved in the publication of the book from the outset; and researchers were assigned the task of checking other works concerning Mao. One American, Anne Thurston, participated in putting together the English edition and a Chinese, Mr. Y. Xu, was involved in polishing up both editions. This latter fact is omitted from the acknowledgments in the Chinese edition and the contribution of that Chinese went without recognition.

The discrepancy between the two editions leads one to believe that the English version has been embroidered and spiced up with lurid anecdotes such as cited above, which are absent in the Chinese edition but have been invented and tucked into the English edition.

Another example is a "scandal" mentioned on p. 314-315 of the English edition, not having to do with Mao's private life but Deng Xiaoping's, who during the Lushan Conference, allegedly stayed in a hospital in Beijing, got a nurse pregnant and later forced her to have an abortion. This episode was also deleted from the Chinese edition.

No notable inside stories are told in the book about Zhou Enlai and Deng Yingchao, but insulting words of character assassination describe Zhou as Mao's slave, who like a faithful dog or butler answers the master's every beck and call submissively. His wife, Deng Yingchao, is painted as a self-serving smooth operator who consolidates her own position and power by fawning on the powers that be.

Li Zhisui was packaged and heralded by the establishment media as an honest person whose

memoirs are an accurate record of events. Li allegedly enjoyed Mao's trust for more than two decades, was a confidant of Wang Dongxing, security chief, and privy to the inner workings of the factions at the top, including a top-secret plan to arrest the Gang of Four, which was carried out under the direction of Wang. With the death of Mao, he suffered setbacks in his career and finally came to the U.S. Once in the U.S., he ingratiated himself with the anti-Communist scholars here and made a profitable living out of vilifying Mao and communism.

A manipulative author who bowdlerizes his own work to suit different readerships is no honest and trustworthy witness but a swindler out to make a name for himself, to hell with truth. One is entitled to change his political beliefs, but not at the expense of his own integrity and national dignity. Not only did Li disregard a physician's duty to protect his patient's confidentiality, but he even fabricated false information about Mao's medical condition and collaborated with imperialist and anti-Chinese elements to drag Mao's name through the mud. By the yardstick of both Chinese and Western moral values and legal norms, what he and Random House have done is unconscionable.

Andrew Nathan touted these memoirs of fabrications and slanders as a work recording historical facts. It is disingenuous for him to claim in the foreword that other works published in China *corroborate* many details in Dr. Li' account but differ from his by *leaving out* unflattering aspects of the story of Mao's life, for what is at issue here are not those parts of Dr. Li's account that are consistent with other works but those intended to illuminate the dark

side of Mao's life which other works have purportedly left out.

The final English edition has been the product of years of "editorial work" headed by Anne Thurston, who was recommended by Andrew Nathan to Random House, and it is to be expected that the finished product of such extensive "editorial work" would not blatantly contradict published accounts whose accuracy is generally accepted.

What is of central relevance here, however, is the fact that most of the passages crafted to depict Mao's dark side can not even be *corroborated* by a different language edition of the same book, the above cited examples being only a fraction of the innumerable discrepancies between the Chinese and the English editions. By attributing unique historical value to the lurid anecdotes in the book, Andrew Nathan violated the basic tenets of scholarship.

Li Zhisui and Andrew Nathan not only assailed Mao but also insulted the Chinese people. They totally negated China in Mao's time and condemned Chinese socialism as an unmitigated disaster. To them, China after liberation fared worse than during Kuomintang rule. Andrew Nathan's foreword affords a telling glimpse into his Eurocentrist prejudice and contempt for the Chinese people.

He viciously caricatured Mao and his entourage: "Women were served to order like food"; "the party and army political departments" had the task of recruiting beautiful young women of proletarian background "for possible service in his bed." At the same time, he praised Li's western training and "foreign tincture," whose so-called open

expression, soft cheeks and neat clothes betrayed him as one who came back from the West and made him stand out among his stony-faced Chinese cohorts.

In his eyes, the overwhelming majority of the Chinese people are ignorant peasants and only a small number of Chinese such as Dr. Li with western training and foreign tincture are capable of modernizing China. A group of so-called leaders of the democratic movement have coagulated around a project he put together at Columbia's Institute of East Asia Studies called "China and Constitutionalism." He has condemned the Chinese people on the mere allegations of a physician shown to have no scruples whatsoever, capable of saying anything to curry favor with his actual or potential benefactors.

Cultural imperialists need someone like Li Zhisui to help spread the gospel of the West in China and, alas, it's not hard to find Li's kindred spirits in China. Li even agreed to openly vilify the Chinese people on foreign television, claiming he wanted to be history's witness. For such a weighty undertaking, he allowed ghost writers to churn out an English edition first and then had it translated into Chinese and reimported into China. Andrew Nathan claimed that this book is the most revealing book ever published about Mao's true nature. We believe that, on the contrary, it has revealed the true nature of Li Zhisui and Andrew Nathan who have stooped to such baseness.

Major representatives of U.S. media such as CNN, BBC, *The New York Times* and scholars like Andrew Nathan are in the habit of setting themselves up as supreme judges of Third World countries' politics, history and morality. This book reveals the

length they will go to manufacture public opinion in favor of their verdicts.

Mao Zedong is a great Chinese and world leader. The Chinese people are exceedingly proud that China produced such a towering historical figure. He is revered and remembered for his lofty political vision to which he dedicated his entire life with admirable courage, bold initiative and selflessness. More important, he showed the Chinese people the bright future of a just and egalitarian society. Some people revile him today precisely because there are so many Chinese people who still revere him and cherish his vision.

Serious assessments of a political figure should be based on his or her public words and deeds and eschew vulgar speculations about his or her private thoughts or doings. Some people attack Mao on the grounds of sexual mores, but it is precisely in the field of women's liberation that Mao's theory and practice have left a powerful legacy recognized around the world. He showed that institutionalized gender discrimination could be eradicated and that the concept of male superiority could be effectively fought. Longstanding social ills such as prostitution and concubinage disappeared from new China. These achievements put the old society to shame.

It cannot be denied that in little over a quarter century, China shed its hundred-year legacy of being bullied and carved up by foreign powers and became a world-class power to be reckoned with. This metamorphosis was made possible by Mao and the Chinese Communist Party, whose leadership sparked the Chinese masses' nationalism and socialist enthusiasm and blazed a path unpalatable to the

imperialists and achieved results that cultural imperialists before Andrew Nathan had never dreamed were possible.

China faces both bright prospects and an inevitably tortuous road ahead. Under Mao's leadership, China regained its independence and sovereignty and laid the groundwork for national renaissance, but perils loom because imperialists do not relish China's reawakening and there are too many Chinese who volunteer to spearhead the cultural imperialists' invasion of China, denigrate nationalism as Boxer mentality and treat socialism as a scourge.

The arrogance of Li Zhisui, Andrew Nathan and company thrives on their perception that the Chinese are docile and passive and will ignore an outrage of this nature. It is imperative to let them know that they are wrong, for if we do not stand up to their onslaughts, the unhealthy trend of self-promotion with the help of foreign patrons will grow, further fueling the arrogance of cultural imperialism. Unity confers strength. This open letter is intended to show that such insults and provocation will be answered.

Signatories: C. H. Hua, Association for Peaceful Unification of China; J. F. Wu; Dr.Teng Li; Nan Ping Tan; Chung Wang, Institute of Sino Strategy Study, LA; Juan Wu Lee; J. P. Wang, China Unification Association, Taiwan; Dong Ping Han; Dr. Chung-wu Kung; Dr. Chia-ping Huang; Dr. Xu L. Dong; Spring Wang, Asian Pacific Women's Political Caucus; Professor H. Y. Yeh, UCLA; Chi Weng, Institute of Sino Strategy Study, DC; Chung Kwang Yang; Professor Shiao Po Wang, World University of Journalism, Taipei; Jian Kang Xu; Professor John Chen, Temple U.; Professor Che-tsao Huang, York College/CUNY; Heh Lee; Nancy Sang; Li Tsang, Asian Arts Foundation; Shou Teng Hsu; Dr. Sheng-hui Chang; K. H. Yang;

Ai Ai Jing; Prof. Y. Wang, Howard U.; Nei Chien Chu; Chang-chieh Lin; Ching-li Su; M. Chao; Dr. C. Y. Tung; Y.C. Chen; Shih Hsiung Chang, Mainland-Taiwan Culture and Trades Exchange Assn.; Dr. Sheng Yu Liu, China Study Group; Dr. K. C. Lin; L. C. Chu; Professor T. N. Mao, Chung Hsing U., Taiwan; S. C. Jiang, China Unification Association, Taiwan; P. F. Lin, China Unification Association, Taiwan; Tian Ming Liang; Su Yang Lin, Association of Political Prisoners in Taiwan; Li Fung Lin, Association of Political Prisoners in Taiwan; Professor C. M. Chen, College of Chinese Medicine, Taiwan; T. Y. Tang, Association for Advancement of Teachers' Rights in Taiwan; Tian. T. Liao, *Overlook* magazine; Ming. S. Chang; Li Hsia Wang, Taiwan Labor Party; Dr. Ken Chang, Teh-lin Yen; Jianiu Pan; Andrew Kwan; Professor T. Sun, SUNY Binghamton; Professor Hsing Sheng Tai, National Academy of Sciences, China; Yan Qiu; Ling Zhi; Zhu Zhong-hui; Wendy Hsiao; Z. Cui, Chien P. Juan, Sze Tan Miou, Meizhi Lin.

Protest Against the Random House Memoirs

by Mao Zedong's Staff and Others

We recently received from Messrs. Hua Chuenhsiung and Tung Chingyuan of New York a copy of "An Open Letter concerning the 'Memoirs of the Private Physician of Mao Zedong,'" which had been published in *The Asian American Times* in the U.S., the *Straits Review* in Taiwan and *Wen Hui Pao* in Hongkong. Among the more than seventy signers of the Open Letter are patriotic Chinese nationals resident in the U.S. as well as professors and writers in Taiwan, all of whom are respected and influential intellectuals in their respective spheres. We deeply admire their moral courage in speaking out for the truth and exposing the sinister schemes of the reactionary forces....

The author of the memoirs, Li Zhisui, parlayed his position as a physician of Mao into wealth and fame at the expense of national pride and to the satisfaction of imperialist forces. He fabricated outlandish stories to slander Mao Zedong and his comrades and did his best to distort and denigrate the hard-won achievements of socialism under Chinese Communism. Any fair-minded Chinese is justifiably appalled at Li's having stooped so low.

Lis so-called memoirs is awash in lies and malice. He fabricated events and falsified details. This came as no surprise to people who knew him. He acquired the nickname of "fox" for his ability to lie without blinking. His memoirs was a further tribute to

this forte of his. Following is a list of examples of how he altered facts.

While it was not until 1957 that he became a primary-care physician of Mao Zedong, in the book he advanced the date by two years. He altered his birth year from 1920 to 1919, thereby changing his birth sign from a monkey to a goat. He claimed in his book to have been director of the clinic in the Zhongnanhai Compound while the fact is he had never been in that position, which had always been occupied by Zheng Xuewen. He claimed to have been rated "outstanding model doctor" although the clinic had never used such a rating system. He claimed to be Mao's English tutor while it was someone else who held that job.

Li's distortions were not limited to these minor matters either. The medical team that oversaw the final effort to wrest Mao from the brink of death was formed by renowned specialists Tao Shouqi, Wu Jie, Fang Qi and Jiang Sichang. In his book, Li shamelessly passed himself off as the leader of the rescue team. In a similar vein, he boasted that he headed the team entrusted with the preservation of Mao's body while the truth is it was led by Deputy Minister of Health Huang Shuze and comprised specialists such as Wu Jieping and Lin Juncai.

Even major political events were not immune from his revising zeal. His claim that he had ushered Nixon in to see Mao strains credulity, for a physician like him could never have been allowed to be present on such occasions. His claim that the top secret plan to oust the Gang of Four had been divulged to him three months before its execution was totally false

because such a plan could not have been on the agenda at that particular juncture.

His inventiveness really bordered on the grotesque! His accounts of Zhou Enlai talking to him in private about reshuffles in the Ninth Congress, of how Ye Jianying valued his views and of how Chairman Mao would confide to him his views on this or that personality in late night tête-à-têtes are all fabrications. Anyone privy to the habits of Mao would know that Chairman Mao was never in the habit of making pejorative remarks to his entourage about other people, especially not about members of the central leadership. In a sly attempt to insult Zhou Enlai's memory, Li cast Zhou in a singularly unflattering light by recounting an alleged incident in which Zhou had to report to Mao on his knees.

The episodes he carefully crafted about Mao's private life are a main staple in the book. The people who comprised Mao's staff are outraged by those sensationalistic allegations. Li only tagged along when Mao had to leave the Compound and he was only called in from his separate quarters in the South Dock area of the Compound when his services were needed. It was also widely known that Mao did not like doctors fretting over him and did not relish taking medication, even when he was ill. Li, therefore, could not have been on such intimate terms with Mao as claimed in the book. As a matter of fact, his hypocritical personality was rather resented by Mao.

How is it possible that we who were Mao's closest guards, attendants and secretaries have never seen or heard of the lurid things described in the book? Li declared that the memoirs were drawn from his personal experience and that he only wrote about

what he had seen and not about what he had merely heard about. Did he really see all those things he described? Didn't he write in another part of the book that he hadn't really witnessed certain events? It was widely known that Mao liked to work late and sometimes through the night and always left his door open with one guard at the gate and one at the door. Is it possible that those lewd episodes he dreamt up were really something that a dirty mind like his would have liked happen to himself?

Li was not exactly of a high moral calibre. In one incident, his housekeeper caught him taking a bath with his daughter-in-law, and for decrying his beastly behavior she was summarily dismissed. During the Cultural Revolution, he was once caught in flagrante delicto by the police in a tryst in a park with the wife of a government official who had been sent to the countryside. These were fully documented cases of misconduct. Such a degenerate, such a moral reprobate, was certainly not above fabricating lies for pecuniary and political gains.

The Open Letter pointed out: "Mao Zedong is a towering figure in Chinese and world history. The Chinese people are proud to have produced a Mao Zedong. He is revered and remembered by people for his lofty political vision, to the realization of which he dedicated his entire life. His lifelong struggle to realize that vision was characterized by admirable courage, bold strategy and selfless devotion to his cause. More important, he showed the Chinese people the bright future of an equitable society. It is precisely the respect and affection he still enjoys among the Chinese people and their commitment to his socialist

vision that have provoked some to heap calumny on Chairman Mao."

These words have accurately captured the sentiment of the Chinese people. Any Chinese inspired by a sense of justice and the greater good of the nation would have come to the same conclusion. Mao Zedong has made monumental contributions to the Chinese nation. His simple lifestyle, devotion to work and integrity were incompatible with decadent ways of life, and no amount of mudslinging on the part of imperialist forces and their lackeys will ever succeed in soiling Mao's noble image. Their malicious characterization of Mao as a lascivious feudal emperor that puts him in the same league as the hedonistic wining and dining capitalist politicians simply lacks credibility and can only fool those who are intellectually lazy or who think only with the soles of their feet.

To Andrew Nathan, who wrote the foreword to plug the memoirs, the Open Letter replied: "Nathan asserted that this is so far the most revealing book ever published about Mao's true nature. In our view, what was exposed on the contrary was the despicable depths to which Li Zhisui and Nathan have descended." This observation is right on the mark!

In the publication of this book, both center-stage and back-stage players and plotters (author, translator, publisher, reviewers and anonymous participants and supporters) have resorted to underhanded means and wielded a poison pen to advance their sinister agenda. Their behind-the-scenes sponsors mounted a massive campaign enlisting the help of the publishing industry, the press and

academia on a scale unequaled in the annals of political struggles both at home and abroad.

One is surprised by how pathetically low the imperialists and their lackeys have sunk: they have no stomach for a debate on theories and they have not a shred of evidence to back up their claims, therefore they have been obliged to turn to vicious personal attacks and rumormongering to accomplish their purpose of demonizing leaders of the Chinese and world communist movements, smearing socialist new China and insulting the Chinese nation.

In righteous indignation, we hereby add our support to the Open Letter and denounce in the strongest terms those involved overtly or behind the scenes in the publication of the memoirs. We will not allow the dignity of our nation, our country and the people's revolution to be dragged through the mud....

The towering figure of Mao Zedong will forever be the pride of the Chinese people and the scurrilous attacks by a handful of Chinese scum and their supporters are doomed to failure.

(July 22, 1995)

Signatories: Shi Zhe, former director of the Office of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC); Ye Zilong, Chairman Mao's former secretary, CPC Central Committee; Wang DongXing former director of the Office of the CPC Central Committee, director of the Security Bureau and Chairman Mao's chief bodyguard; Huang Shuze, deputy Minister of Health, People's Republic of China, and Chairman Mao's physician; Shen Hucheng, Chairman Mao's administrative secretary; Gao Zhi, Chairman Mao's confidential secretary; Gao Fuyou, former company commander of Chairman Mao's guards company at the local area, first deputy director of the office of the State Council; Li Yinqiao, Chairman Mao's former chief bodyguard; Wang Hebin, medical scientist, professor, and Chairman Mao's former physician; Zheng

Xuewen, former clinic director of Zhongnanhai and director of the Health Care Bureau of the CPC Central Committee; Wang Yuqing, Chairman Mao's former bodyguard and section chief of security; Han Guixin, Chairman Mao's family housekeeper; Li Liancheng, Chairman Mao's bodyguard; Tian Yunyu, Chairman Mao's bodyguard; Zhang Muqi, Chairman Mao's bodyguard; Wu Liandeng, staff managing Chairman Mao's household duties and daily life from 1964 to September 1976; Gu Zuoliang, staff managing Chairman Mao's daily diet from 1963 to 1972; Zhou Fuming, Chairman Mao's bodyguard from 1960 to September 1976; Yang Gending, former cadre of first squadron of the Security Regiment of the Party Central Committee, in charge of Chairman Mao's security at local area; Yu Xingfa, former troop unit leader of the Security Regiment of the Party Central Committee, in charge of Chairman Mao's security at local area; Liu Jimao, former district leader of the Security Regiment of the Party Central Committee, in charge of Chairman Mao's security at local area; Zhu Dekui, Chairman Mao's private driver from 1958 to 1964; Lu Hongsheng, Chairman Mao's security guard at local area; Zhang Yue, former deputy director of Security Section of the Security Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, in charge of Chairman Mao's security; Zhang Changsheng, former security secretary of the Security Bureau of the Party Central Committee, in charge of Chairman Mao's and others' security; Li Zhengtai, former culture teacher of the Security Regiment of the Party Central Committee; Miao Junsheng, former staff officer of the Security Regiment of the Party Central Committee, in charge of Chairman Mao's and others' security; Tuo Deliang, former political director of the Security Regiment of the Party Central Committee, in charge of Chairman Mao's and others' security; Han Baogui, former staff officer of the Security Regiment of the Party Central Committee, in charge of Chairman Mao's and others' security; Wang Suiliang, former troop unit deputy leader of the Security Regiment of the Party Central Committee, in charge of Chairman Mao's and others' security; Wang Xianju, former deputy political instructor, Central Security Command, in charge of Chairman Mao's and the central leadership's security; Li Min, former branch head, Central Security Command, in charge of Chairman Mao's and the central leadership's security; Xin Xinmin, former branch head, Central Security Command, in charge of Chairman Mao's and the central leadership's security; Liu Guangrong, former chief bodyguard of

Deng Xiaoping; Niu Xiangying, former bodyguard of Zhu De; Jin Shanwang, former secretary of Soong Qingling's Office of Security; Shang Yinbin, former deputy head, Hebei Provincial Public Security Dept.; Zhang Fengling, personnel of People's Conference Hall; Shen Juhua, former medical personnel, People's Liberation Army (PLA) General Hospital; Hou Bo, chairwoman, Chinese Female Photographers' Association, former personal photographer of Chairman Mao and the central leadership; Wang Lanying, Singer, former performer of Zhan You cultural troupe; Ma Wenui, former vice president, Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC); Wu Lengxi, chairman, All-China Association of News Workers; Wei Chuantong, Chinese Red Army veteran, PLA general, poet, calligrapher; Li Erchong, former governor of Hebei province, author, professor of Chinese Literature, Wu Han University, and dean emeritus, College of Literature, Central China University of Science and Engineering; Zhu Zhongli, physician, author; director emeritus, Chinese Medical Society, wife of Wang Jiaxiang; Wang Jiqing, inspector of Chinese National Education Commission, wife of Wang Zhen; Wang Zemin, former director, Domestic Politics, People's Daily; Li Zhen, Chinese Red Army veteran, PLA general, calligrapher, Zhang Xianyue, Chinese Red Army veteran, PLA general; Cao Siming, Chinese Red Army veteran, PLA general; Shi Jinqian, calligrapher, former deputy director, PLA General Political Dept; Hua Nan, newswriter, former deputy director, PLA General Political Dept.; Huang Yingfu, Chinese Red Army veteran, general, former deputy commander, General Office of the Armed Police; Zhang Changhai, director of "Zhong Liu" Magazine, former editor in chief of "Guang Ming Ribao"; Li Qi, editor in chief, "Xin Chao" Poetry Journal; Peng Xuyi, senior officer, People's Volunteers Headquarters, military commentator, general counsellor, "Zhong Hua Re Tu," Hong Kong; Deng Bin, director, Office of Politics and Law, Wuhan; Li Anshi, teacher, younger sister of Martyr Liu Zhisun's wife Li Shuyi; Cao Yu, playwright, chairman, All-China Association of Literary and Art Circles; Zang Kejia, poet, member of CPPCC, consultant, Chinese Writers Association, president emeritus, Mao Zedong's Poems Research Society, consultant, "Poetry" Journal; Lin Mohan, literary and arts theorist, editor in chief, "Zhong Liu" Magazine; Ouyang Shan, writer, president, Modern Revolutionary Writers Research Society,Guangdong; He Jingzhi, poet, playwright, president,

Mao Zedong's Poems Research Society; Xu Xiaobing, chairman, Chinese Photographers Association; Hu Ke, playwright, vice chairman, Chinese Playwrights Association; Qu Wei, composer, vice chairman, Chinese Musicians Association; Hu Peng, actor, director, Chinese Playwrights Association; Qian Danhui, poet, associate dean, Shanxi Academy of Social Sciences, vice president, Chinese Research Society of Literature in the Liberated Regions; Wei Wei, writer, president, Chinese Research Society of Literature in the Liberated Regions; Zhu Ziqi, poet, member of the presidium, Chinese Writers Association; Chen Yong, literary theorist, editor in chief, "Wen Hui Bao"; Yang Bing, literary theorist, poet; Lu Meilin, literary theorist, associate dean and research fellow, Chinese Arts Research Society; Zheng Bonong, literary theorist, editor in chief, "Wen Yi Bao"; Hou Liangpei, poet, writer, poetry commentator; Liu Shaotang, writer, member of Chinese Literature Union, vice chairman, Writers Association of the City of Beijing; Ke Yan, writer, vice president, Chinese Literary Foundation; Cheng Daixi, literarature and arts theorist, editor in chief, "Literary and Arts Theory and Criticism"; Liu Chaolan, film scripwriter, deputy editor in chief, "Zhong liu" Magazine; Mai Xin, deputy editor in chief, "Zhong Liu" Magazine, senior editor; Jiang Bo, writer, guest editor, "Zhong Liu"; Chen Zhiang, musician, guest editor, "Zhong Liu"; Pan Renshan, literary commentator, "Zhong Liu" ; Li Jun, poet; Zheng Yonghui, professor, Chinese College of International Relations; Deng Xiangtian, leading cadre and research fellow, "Mao Zedong Comes on the Scene of China" book series; Li RunLai, editor and research fellow, "Mao Zedong Comes on the Scene of China"; Wang Jizhong, essayist, director, Political Research Office, Linqiu County, Shanxi Province; Luan Baojun, former editor in chief, " Liberation Daily," Shanghai; Liu Jin, essayist, former editor in chief, "Wenxue Bao"; Zeng Wenyuan, deputy editor-in-chief, "Wenxue Bao"; Fang Jiawen, president, Literary and Artistic Creation Association, Shanghai; Liu Rongting, director, Literary and Artistic Creation Association, Shanghai; Yu Feng, Writer, vice president, Modern Revolutionary Writers Research Society, Guangdong; Luo Yuanwen, writer, vice preisdent and secretary general, Modern Revolutionary Writers, Research Society, Guangdong; Fan Yang, writer, vice president, Modern Revolutionary Writers Research Society, Guangdong; Lou Qi, professor, Chinese Literature Dept., Zhongshan University, Guangzhou; Chen Heng,

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Hefei; Chen Xiao, deputy head, Propaganda Dept., United University, Hefei; Wang Jikun, professor, United University, Hefei; Wang Zhusheng, vice president, United University, Hefei; Sun Chengcai, deputy chief physician, Armed Forces Central Hospital, Xuzhou.

Li Zhisui's Claims about his Services

by Huang Shuze, Chairman Mao's doctor

I was Chairman Mao's *baojian* or primary care doctor from 1943 until 1976 when Chairman Mao passed away. Together with Drs. Wu Jieping and Lin Juncai, I was in charge of preserving Chairman Mao's body, and I am fully capable of exposing the lies that Li Zhisui peddled in his Random House "memoirs."

I had not met Li Zhisui before liberation in 1949. Li came to work in the Zhongnanhai clinic after liberation. The clinic director was Dr. Zhen Xuewen, while Li was one of the doctors, and never had the position of director as he claimed in his "memoirs." Li was good at surgery - according to himself. During that time, he longed to be Chairman Mao's personal physician, and tried every possible way to attain his goal. Later, on someone else's recommendation, Dr. Fu Lianzhang, then the deputy minister of the People's Liberation Army Health Department, agreed to it reluctantly, since he knew that Li Zhisui had been in the Kuomintang's ultra-right organization, "Fu Xing Association" (also named "Lan Yi Association"), and he disliked Li's slick personality.

Li Zhisui became a *baojian* doctor of Chairman Mao's in July of 1957, not in 1955 as he falsely claimed. At that time, I was also Chairman Mao's *baojian* doctor and director of the Health Care Office under Fu Lianzhang. Wang Dongxing asked me to move to Zhongnanhai in order to be aware of Chairman Mao's health condition at all times. The place I lived in was Daiyuexuan in Zhongnanhai, not far from Chairman Mao's living quarters.

I knew that Chairman Mao's favorite hobby was reading. Books occupied half of his bed. He had few other hobbies. He did not like to consult physicians or take medicine. When I went to see him, he talked more about history than about his discomfort. He liked to work at night, and he did most of his writing then. There were security guards on duty at the door, and no one was allowed in. What Li Zhisui said were slanders to smear Chairman Mao's name, lies that no one would believe. Those who provided personal services for Chairman Mao were proud of their jobs. The working staff, for example Drs. Wang Hebin, Qian Yijian, and Xu Tao, and nurses Wu Xujun, Zhu Baogui, and Yin Manli, who also became doctors later on, all felt great love and respect for Chairman Mao.

When Chairman Mao was in critical condition, some famous specialists such as Drs. Tao Shouqi, Wu Jie, Fang Qi and Jiang Sichang were the ones giving emergency treatment, and the head of the team was Dr. Liu Xiangping. I can testify that Li Zhisui was **not** the head of that team, contrary to his Random House claims.

After Chairman Mao passed away, Drs. Wu Jieping, Lin Juncai, Xu Jing and myself were in charge of preserving Chairman Mao's body. I was the head of the team; Li Zhisui was never "the head" as he bragged in the Random House book. Also, the person who taught Chairman Mao English was Lin Ke, not Li Zhisui, as Random House again fraudulently claimed.

At present, I am in good health, and still hold the position of deputy minister of Public Health. I am

extremely indignant at Li Zhisui's slanders against Chairman Mao.

(August 10, 1995)

Denunciation of Slanders against Chinese Women

by Wang Lanyin, former Zhan You Cultural Troupe performer

Nineteen hundred years ago, Judas sold out his master Jesus to the enemy for thirty pieces of gold coins. Jesus was nailed to the cross, yet faithful followers still believe in him to this day.

Now, nearly twenty years after Mao Zedong's death, Li Zhisui, who worked as a *baojian* (primary-care) doctor for Chairman Mao, has written a memoir in the traitor Qin Kuai's mold. The title of "Chairman Mao's doctor" holds a high monetary value. May I ask: how many U.S. dollars did Li Zhisui get?

Li's memoir contains too many lies and rumors. One of them is, "many of those young pretty girls of cultural troupes had sex with Mao." On hearing such a dirty claim, one can not but think of an old accusation which makes us furious: "Communists share their wives."

Li Zhisui said, "Mao had venereal disease, and transmitted it to his girl friends." Could he name them? Those dance partners were selected by strict procedures, and the records in their files are available for examination.

Beginning in 1951, I went to the dance parties in Zhongnanhai and continued doing so until the Cultural Revolution started. Li Zhisui claimed that three, four, even five women were sleeping with Mao simultaneously. He must have known who they were, which units they worked in. Chairman Mao is dead

and can no longer defend himself, but many of those dance partners are still alive.

I want to say that members of cultural troupes were not *wei an fu*. Most of us joined the army around 1949 when new China was born. Performers took rigorous tests and were selected among numerous candidates. Our views on life and world may not have been totally righteous, but we joined the army with revolutionary enthusiasm. A prosperous new People's Republic of China was our goal. Andrew Nathan said that women were served to order to Mao like food. Such a slander not only vilifies us cultural workers but has smeared all Chinese women.

The dance parties were attended by only three or four members of the army cultural troupes. Dance partners were carefully selected. We went to the parties as a group with a leader. The group usually had no more than 30 people, including a band consisting mainly of male comrades. We left the parties also as a group. What Li Zhisui said, that pretty girls were left behind after a party, was a lie. Upon returning to our units, we had to report to our superior what we saw and heard.

Marshal Zhu De, Kang Keqing (Madame Zhu), Liu Shaoqi, and Wang Guangmei (Madame Liu) often came to the dance parties. Premier Zhou sometimes came to the parties to have discussions with Chairman Mao. The dance parties were never held for Chairman Mao alone. Jiang Qing also often came to the parties. Chairman Mao usually came at 10 p.m. and left at midnight. He once joked, "I am not as free as you are!"

Chairman Mao danced walking steps, no matter which rhythm was playing. He chatted with his

dance partners: What is your name? Where are you from? Once, a partner said that her name was Wang Shuanghua, Chairman Mao responded immediately, "This is not a good name, 'two Chinas.'"

In the fall of 1960, a certain cultural troupe made costly gorgeous costumes for its performers. Chairman Mao saw this unusual scene and asked: "Did you buy these dresses?" "No," they said, "the dresses were made by the cultural troupe." He asked, "What for?" They replied, "For the reception of foreign guests." Chairman Mao pointed to Marshal Zhu De and asked: "Are we foreign guests?" The head of the troupe felt uneasy, and never had us put on those dresses again.

During this period, Chairman Mao seemed in low spirits. We asked his working staff if Chairman Mao was unhappy. Their answer was, the Soviets had broken their contracts with China and withdrawn their experts, asserting that we would not be able to make atom bombs without their expertise and would be helpless with our scrap iron. How could Chairman Mao be happy? We were deeply moved.

What Chairman Mao was concerned with was the fate of our country and the safety of our people, yet Li Zhisui's Random House "memoirs" concocted the lie that "Mao became a Taoist practitioner." What a stone heart Li had!

Li Zhisui, you brought us shame! Let me now recite a ballad *(Shun Kou Liu)* that we cultural performers used to sing in the battlefield:

There are so many people in the whole of China,
They sing patriotic songs together,
The sound they make is like thunder,

The sweat they shed converges into a river.
Drown those evildoers who concoct false rumors!
Drown those evildoers who concoct false rumors!

(August, 1995)

A Reply to Li Zhisui's Sons

by Wang Yuqing, Chairman Mao's bodyguard

I've read the interview with Li Zhisui's sons in *World Journal*. I did not expect that they would go so far as to dish out such a malicious allegation that I had died of cancer "as long ago as 1983." In order to confuse and poison people's minds, they then declared that the authenticity of the open letter [signed by more than one hundred of Chairman Mao's former staff and others] protesting Li Zhisui's fraudulent Random House memoirs is dubious due to the signature of a dead person.

Since they claim I have already died, I have to say to the whole world that I am still alive! I am still alive! Enclosed are some recent pictures of me. Please take a good look at them and see how very much alive I am.

It seems that these two brothers, Dachong and Erchong, having had as the Chinese say "too much bread and milk" since living abroad with their father, have also taken up their father's habit of starting rumors and making up lies. They protest in the interview that they themselves are being harmed by our open letter's denunciation of their father's false memoirs, but their own behavior now is a glaring example of their father's evil influence. "Every injustice has its perpetrator, every debt has its debtor." Dachong and Erchong, I have to tell you something as an older person: it is your own father who has done great harm to you both. You should not blame anyone else.

Dachong, Erchong, I have to say that the opinion expressed by us 135 comrades regarding your father and his false memoirs, our vehement denunciation and repudiation of his despicable conduct toward China and Chinese Communist Party, are just and irrefutable. What your father has done reeks of terrible injustice. He has turned into the scum of our nation as well as a criminal against our people. You should never don your father's mantle or blindly take up the cudgels for him. You know very little about him, so what you said in your interview lacks credibility. Why say such nonsense?

Dachong said "it is unfair to accuse the dead" since his father cannot now speak for himself. Then I have to ask if it was fair for your father and his accomplices, including certain foreigners who have ulterior motives, to malign Chairman Mao!

Dachong said our open letter is like "stinking water" thrown on father and sons. This is quite dishonest. Let me ask if it was moral for your father and his accomplices to have thrown so much stinking water on Chairman Mao, his comrades-in-arms and the whole Chinese nation!

Dachong said in the interview that he had heard people working for Chairman Mao calling his father "director." This is quite unconvincing. Is this his only proof that his father served as clinic director?

Erchong said he would file a law suit and ask for compensation for the discrediting of his father. I'm glad he has called our attention to this course of action. Many of us as well as Chairman Mao's children are thinking of suing the people responsible for Li Zhisui's fraudulent memoirs and seeking damages for their slanders against Chairman Mao.

Dachong, Erchong, as an elder, I have to reproach you two. There is an old saying in my hometown that you should not be too mean, otherwise you will not die calmly and your offspring will not live happily. This is true, I think, no matter where you are, inside or outside the country. Anyone who turns into a traitor to his motherland, wagging his tail to please his foreign masters, is extremely evil. Do you see what I am trying to say? Do not follow in your father's footsteps.

I feel greatly honored to have worked first as a bodyguard and then section chief of security for Chairman Mao, retiring in the early 1970's owing to my poor health. In the over two decades since then, I have deeply felt what a great leader Chairman Mao was. That is why I am so angry with Li Zhisui's conduct. I have to stand up and bear witness to Chairman Mao's nobility. I believe all the signatories to the open letter share my attitude and feelings.

Finally, I want to reiterate my opinion that Chairman Mao, a giant in history, will always be the pride of the Chinese people, and any maligning of him by a traitor and his backers is completely in vain!

(August 9, 1995)

Qi Benyu Criticizes Li Zhishui's Memoirs

Once Mao's "court writer" and a prominent member of the Central Cultural Revolution Group, Qi Benyu seldom ventures outside his home these days. He does not see reporters, does not discuss politics, and does not write memoirs. Lu Yuan, an editor of *The Dallas Times* in the United States, recently met with Qi Benyu during a business trip to the Chinese mainland. Lu's father is a friend of Qi's. They talked about past events. Lu Yuan asked Qi Benyu to comment on Li Zhishui's *The Memoirs of Mao's Personal Physician*. Qi Benyu rejected Li Zhishui's arguments in no uncertain terms, and disclosed secrets about the Cultural Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party (CPC)'s Central Committee.

Lu: A memoir written by Li Zhishui, Mao Zedong's private doctor, was recently published in Taiwan and the United States, causing quite a stir overseas. Have you read the book?

Qi: Yes. A friend brought a copy back from Japan. Before discussing this issue, let's follow Confucius and do a "name rectification" first. Mao Zedong did not have any private doctors. Mao Zedong's doctors and nurses were all "public." Li Zhishui was first a doctor at the Zhongnanhai clinic in Beijing. When I joined Zhongnanhai in 1950, he was providing medical care for cadres and workers in Zhongnanhai. He had studied abroad and was a "foreign doctor." His medical skills were better than those of the homegrown doctors trained by the Liberation Army.

In addition he was conscientious and responsible and was able to provide explanations; consequently everyone loved to see him for illnesses. He thus became well-known and was named a model worker. He did a good job of providing medical care for Wang Dongxing, then chief of the Zhongnanhai security office, and thus came to the liking of Wang Dongxing; he was then recommended to Mao Zedong and joined Mao's medical team. At first without any official title, he did not officially become Mao Zedong's health-maintenance doctor until the rectification campaign in 1957. As I recall, on my way to a meeting at Juxiang Hall, Mao Zedong's residence, on the evening of 3 May 1958, I saw him on duty together with Xu Yefu, Mao Zedong's confidential secretary, and Li Yinqiao, commander of the guards, in the duty office beside Mao Zedong's bedroom.

Lu: Li Zhishui says that Mao Zedong was not a leader of the proletariat but an autocratic feudal emperor. His rule brought untold sufferings to the people of China. "The memoir," he says, "is a historical record of the sufferings of ordinary people under Mao Zedong's totalitarian rule." What is your comment?

Qi: Li Zhishui did work in the vicinity of Mao Zedong for many years, but he worked exclusively as a health-maintenance doctor, with little political knowledge. As a result, when attacking Mao Zedong for some purpose, he could not but imitate others, accusing Mao Zedong of being a feudal emperor, an accusation which has been fashionable...

What is a feudal emperor? A hereditary monarch who oppresses peasants and maintains landlord domination. Who was Mao Zedong? He was the only great figure in Chinese history who was the leader of hundreds of millions of peasants in their successful eventual overthrow of landlord domination. He was called the "peasant king" when he was young, and was in rebellion against the landlord class for all his life; he was the greatest curse for feudal emperors, and was the greatest rebel in the over two thousand years of feudal society. It is more absurd to call Mao Zedong a feudal emperor than to call a deer a horse or to call black white.

It is also sheer fabrication to describe Mao Zedong as "autocratic"! Perhaps Li Zhishui never saw how the Northern Warlords, the Japanese, collaborators with the Japanese, and the Guomindang government suppressed peasants, workers, and students with guns. It was exactly to fight those autocratic enemies of the people that Mao Zedong took up arms to carry out revolution. Mao Zedong established the red Soviet government, the resisting-Japan democratic government, and the democratic government of the liberated areas; even people like the American journalist Edgar Snow would admit that those governments were democratic governments without precedent in Chinese history. After the victory of the Chinese revolution, Mao Zedong established the government of the People's Republic of China. Despite many defects in terms of democracy building, it was the most democratic government in Chinese history.

Except for the exceptional period of the Great Cultural Revolution, all major decisions of this

government were made by legally designated meetings after deliberations. Even during the Great Cultural Revolution when state power was paralyzed at various levels, decisions on major affairs of the party and the state were still made by legally designated meetings of the CPC Central Committee and the State Council after deliberations. As lawful procedures were followed, you cannot say that the situation was one of autocracy! Certainly, during that period, many decisions were adopted according to the will of Mao Zedong because of his prestige, but as lawful procedures were followed, the situation cannot be described as one of autocracy. You may criticize the imperfections, underdevelopment, or even violations of the rules of democracy, but you cannot simply equate it with the imperial autocracy of the feudal times.

It is not that Mao Zedong was flawless in terms of theory and practice of the democratic system of the party and the state, but he was nevertheless an explorer and practitioner in regard to theory and practice of the democratic system of the party and the state. **Mao may have had a thousand shortcomings and committed a thousand mistakes, but all his life he always loved and cared about the people.** (Underscoring supplied)

In his lifetime, comparatively speaking, Mao Zedong liked the bourgeois democratic system of countries such as Britain, France and the United States. We would rather follow, he once said to us, the path of British and American-style democracy than the paths of fascism and Beria. Fascism referred to the dictatorship of the Nazi Party imposed by Hitler, and Beria referred to the secret-agent rule of the internal

affairs ministry of the former Soviet Union characterized by arbitrary arrests and executions.

Feudal emperors are hereditary monarchs, but we did not see Mao Zedong passing the chairman's position to his own wife or children. Despite Jiang Qing's zest for power, Mao Zedong proposed that Hua Guofeng be his successor, a proposal which was then adopted by the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee after deliberations. His children did not have privileges either. Before his death, his only remaining son, Mao Anqing, worked as an ordinary translator. He had two daughters; the older one was an ordinary science-technology cadre, and the younger one was member of the leadership group of a party committee. **Mao Zedong had the wealth of all China in his hands, but except for inheriting some royalty money his children did not get any property. Can there really be such a feudal emperor in the world?**

I had the opportunity to be personally around Mao Zedong in the 1950s, but left Mao Zedong in the 1960s. As far as my personal contacts with him are concerned, I don't think that he was in any way less democratic than any other leaders. Take just the example of the "eight officials" case discussed by Li Zhishui. Back then many leaders believed that some young people's criticisms (the "eight officials' case"), of the General Office of the Central Committee constituted anti-party activities, but only Mao Zedong said that young people should be allowed to criticize those in charge of the General Office of the Central Committee. If this is anti-party, he said, then I am also anti-party, and I am willing to be spanked together with them. The eight officials, who had been

criticized and struggled against for several months, all cried loudly upon hearing Mao Zedong's remarks!

Even Li Zhishui has to admit that Mao Zedong respected him and treated him as an equal, although he attacked such behavior as superficial and hypocritical, and that Mao apologized to him on a number of occasions when he had been wrongly blamed. He says that when apologizing to him Mao said, "It is difficult to work in Cao Cao's camp, isn't it?" Such a story was absolutely true. Mao Zedong would often say this sentence to his subordinates, meaning that just as Cao Cao he would contradict himself and wrongly blame people.

Li Zhishui attacked Mao Zedong for advocating the general line, Great Leap Forward, and people's commune movement which are said to have brought sufferings to the Chinese people. It will take an entire book to conduct a historical criticism or to give a clear account of the origins and development as well as success and failure of the general line, Great Leap Forward, and people's communes which were referred to as the "three red flags" at that time. Indignation and attack are of no help to understanding history or the progress of history. Certainly it is not feasible to ask Li Zhishui to give a clear account of this issue in view of his level of competence and experience. I only hope that people will not forget that Mao Zedong did not work any less hard to correct mistakes of the "three red flags" than to advocate the "three red flags."

It was none other then Mao Zedong himself who was the first to suggest deflating, to suggest that the party at large calm down, to object to the "entry into communism," etc. It was also Mao Zedong who,

shedding tears over people's suffering, punished himself by refusing to eat meat. As everyone knows, Mao Zedong enjoyed a living standard far lower than a small business owner today. He did not eat much of the nice foods. A bowl of pork stew would give him the highest enjoyment; what else could he do to punish himself! Under the leadership of Mao Zedong and his party, the rural economy finally fully recovered toward the middle of the 1960s. *The Book of Change* says, "He who is good at correcting mistakes is guiltless." Mao Zedong was at least one who was "good at correcting mistakes"!

According to Li Zhishui's book, at the time of the Great Leap Forward and the people's communes China was a land where people were howling with pain and starving everywhere, with countless people dead. This is an exaggeration. The shortcomings and mistakes of the Great Leap Forward and the people's communes as well as the natural and manmade disasters of the time did bring suffering to the Chinese people, but the situation was not totally dark, as depicted by Li Zhishui.

Back then, under Mao Zedong's instructions, Tian Jiaying, Lin Ke, Ye Zilong and I of the "first group," as well as Li Zhishui, all went to the grassroots level to share with the people's suffering and pain. We understood how much suffering there was. But why exaggerate? China had annual population surveys since the late 1950s, and the statistics were basically accurate. China's population reached nearly 800 million at the time of the Cultural Revolution. If the Great Leap Forward and the people's communes did indeed create a situation of "nothing on land except white bones" in China, then

where did the 800 million people of China of that time come from? Could they have been dead souls of the kind depicted by Gogol? If so, then China would have already solved its population problem by now. Why then advocate family planning at all?

Lu: The third part of Li Zhishui's memoir is about the Cultural Revolution. Foreigners believe it to be a credible history of the Cultural Revolution. What is your comment?

Qi: Li Zhishui describes the Great Cultural Revolution as purely a power struggle between Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi; based on such a banal understanding, he would not have been able to write a credible history of the Cultural Revolution. A ten-year movement which involved the fortunes of hundreds of millions of people cannot be traced to just a power struggle conducted by one or two persons. To be sure, in all important historical events, the struggle between two ideas or two conceptions often take the form of a "power struggle" between the representative figures. It is fair to say that Li Zhishui has not even entered the door in terms of exploring the historical inevitability and contingency in regard to the Cultural Revolution as well as the hidden historical facts.

I was put under investigation in January, 1968, and did not take part in every phase of the Great Cultural Revolution. But I took part in the historical activities of the early phase of the Cultural Revolution, and I know clearly the history of that period. According to my understanding, in the early phase of the Cultural Revolution Li Zhishui's only job

was to provide medical care for Mao Zedong, Jiang Qing and other people of the first group. He was neither a member of the Cultural Revolution Group nor a part of the office of the Cultural Revolution Group. He was far away from the center of storm of the Cultural Revolution, and could not possibly have known many Cultural Revolution secrets. It is comical for him to provide us with first-hand historical material on the Cultural Revolution.

In my view, aside from the support-the-left activities in which he did personally participate, most of the Cultural Revolution part of his memoir consists of stuff gleaned from newspapers, journals and other people's writings. To win applause by making people believe that he had access to core secrets, he fabricated scenes, resulting in countless errors in the memoir.

Take the example of his depiction of the first event of the Cultural Revolution, the "February Program." He says that he attended the meeting of the Cultural Revolution Group of Five held on February 8, 1967 in Wuhan. Mao Zedong gave a speech at the meeting. However, we can see that the speech in his book was actually a word-by-word copy of another speech of Mao's on December 21, 1966, which was taken down and edited by Guan Feng and Ai Siqi. If he did attend the high-level meeting on February 8, is it not puzzling that he had to copy Mao's speech at this meeting from records of another meeting a couple of months before it?

Li Zhishui goes on to say, "Should we, Peng Zhen said, draft an instruction of the CPC Central Committee to be issued to the entire party after being reviewed by the chairman? You write it, Mao said,

and I will not read it. I immediately knew that big disasters (big disasters for Peng Zhen and Lu Dingyi) would come; Mao Zedong had set up a trap." In fact, at that time Mao Zedong, Jiang Qing and Kang Sheng did not clearly understand Peng Zhen's intentions, nor had they carefully studied the "February Program."

Mao Zedong and Jiang Qing intended to rely on Peng Zhen for creating an opening for the Great Cultural Revolution. Before Peng Zhen went back to Beijing, Jiang Qing briefed Peng Zhen on her contacts among the leftists in Beijing, asking him to see Qi Benyu, Guan Feng, and Li Xifan. Consequently, Peng Zhen made sure that Guan Feng and I participated in the meeting he convened in Beijing. It was only after the incidents of suppressing leftists in Beijing that Mao Zedong carefully studied the February Program and found it to be a document designed to suppress academic criticism.

Li Zhishui's "clairvoyance" was remarkable, for he knew three years in advance that Mao Zedong was setting up a trap for Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. There are innumerable fabricated details in his so-called memoirs. For instance, the claim that Lin Biao created the list of members of the Central Cultural Revolution Group and that the Central Cultural Revolution Group planned to bring about the downfall of Wang Dongxing are all sheer fabrications! And with regard to the Wuhan incident, he is not even clear about what happened, but he comments freely on the incident. The reader will be able to see holes by comparing his "memoirs" with the records written by those who were there.

The Central Committee offices, especially the Zhongnanhai offices, were governed by strict

discipline. The duty of a health-maintenance doctor was to maintain the health of high officials. He was not allowed to have access to secrets of the party and the state. Not just communist parties behave like this, but even the Republican party or the Democratic party of the allegedly democratic United States would most likely forbid a health-maintenance doctor to have access to their core secrets!

Besides, Mao Zedong treated doctors and most foreign-educated intellectuals in a manner which can be described as "showing respect but keeping a distance." This was a characteristic of Mao's which many people knew. This fact can also help ascertain Li Zhishui's position in Zhongnanhai. Nevertheless, Li Zhishui shamelessly claims in his memoir that he not only often attended central meetings involving core secrets of the party and the state, but even attended meetings participated in by only a few members of the Political Bureau, and that he sat together with Mao Zedong and Peng Zhen. It's really preposterous!

In fact, Mao Zedong did not have only Li Zhishui as his health-maintenance doctor. Before him, there had been at least five or six, including the Red Army veteran and Health (Deputy) Minister, Fu Lianzhang, whom Mao Zedong trusted the most. Not a single one of them ever attended meetings of the Political Bureau involving core secrets of the party and the state. Not even Mao Zedong's secretaries and guards, including such veteran party members as Ye Zilong, director of the confidential matters office, and Wang Dongxing, chief of the security office, whom he trusted the most, let alone doctors, could attend

meetings of the Political Bureau. And they were Long March veterans!

When Ye Zilong or Wang Dongxing occasionally came in to take care of some matters, they could only stand on the side and take a brief look. It was not until the time of the Cultural Revolution when the Central Committee asked Wang Dongxing to attend meetings of the Central Cultural Revolution Group that a rear seat was assigned to Wang at meetings of the Political Bureau. Incredibly, a doctor who was a new party member is said to have attended meetings which were restricted to a few members of the Political Bureau, sitting together with Mao Zedong and other central leaders. Li Zhishui is really too shameless in making such preposterous claims.

Not only was Li Zhishui not in a position to attend central meetings discussing secrets of the party and the state, but he was not even qualified to attend ordinary central meetings. According to Li Zhishui, he participated in the meeting convened by Mao Zedong to investigate the case of the "eight officials" and kept notes. In fact participants of this meeting were all leadership figures of the central headquarters, and I was the one with the lowest rank there. Aside from a concise meeting summary written by Lin Ke and Peng Dazhang (one of those in charge of the General Office of the CPC Central Committee), there were no other records. Li Zhishui did not attend that meeting at all.

Li Zhishui's "records" have been created mostly on the basis of rumors. He says, "In the era of Tang Shunzong, Mao said, eight people, including Wang Shuwen and Liu Zongyuan carried out reforms

to seek strengthening," etc. This is totally wrong. Of the two Wangs and eight officials discussed by Mao Zedong at the time, the two Wangs referred to Wang Shuwen and Wang Pi, and the eight officials referred to Liu Zongyuan, Liu Yuxi and others. Mao Zedong, conversant with history books, would certainly not have mixed the two Wangs and the eight officials together. Li Zhishui, who claims to have read *Twenty-four Histories*, dares to "speak for the sages" without even clearly grasping such common knowledge; if so, then "little monks" can really stretch their legs!

Lu: Li Zhishui says that Mao Zedong indulged in promiscuous sex, "living a decadent life," "always treating women as playthings," and "being keen on having sex with women according to Daoist techniques" and that he summoned large numbers of beautiful young ladies to his palace so that "women were presented to him one after another just like dishes," with several people sharing a big bed. Were those facts? If it is not convenient for you to answer, just keep silent. I want to straighten out the facts. Please do not "lie for a great person," saying things you know to be untrue.

Qi: Mao Zedong was my tutor and also my bane. My revolutionary activity spanning eighteen years was performed under the guidance of Mao Zedong; with regard to my eighteen years of imprisonment, it was Jiang Qing and Wang Dongxing who prepared the framing material, but it was Mao Zedong who made the final decision. "Xiao He brought about victories but also debacles." Any feelings of gratitude or bitterness between us have already been evened out.

There does not exist the question of "lying for a great person." I do have the responsibility to clarify these matters, and it is not in line with my character to keep silent on them.

In fact, even before your inquiries on this issue, I already explained to many people that Li Zhishui's accusations about Mao Zedong's philandering were lies and fabrications. But most of those who have read Li Zhishui's memoirs would believe Li Zhishui's lies and fabrications. One American doctor, Hu Dingyi, believed my explanation. Qi Benyu, she said, was imprisoned by Mao Zedong for eighteen years, and therefore he has no need to hide facts for Mao's sake. Dr. Hu had only the reservation that perhaps I did not know those things, but she said that this was not likely for I lived in the vicinity of Mao Zedong for many years. Indeed, if those things did happen, it would be hardly possible that I would not even have heard any rumor.

Regrettably there are too few people like Dr. Hu who can maintain rational thinking. Many people have pre-conceived ideas and listen in a slanted way, believing Li Zhishui's remarks, and think I am covering up for Mao. This is really sad! Decent people are easy to deceive. With fabricated stories, writers are able to extract tears from them and defraud them. How could they see through a person deliberately fabricating history?

I was transferred to the office of political secretaries of the General Office of the Central Committee shortly after the liberation of Beijing. At first a trainee secretary, I became secretary, section chief, and secretary of a party branch successively in later years. By the way, Li Zhishui says that the

director of the office of political secretaries was Chen Boda; he was wrong. Chen Boda never was director of the office of political secretaries. The first director of the office of political secretaries was Shi Zhe, and the deputy directors were Jiang Qing and Tian Jiaying. After Shi Zhe, Tian Jiaying became director, and the deputy directors included Peng Dazhang, He Zai and Chen Bingchen. After Tian Jiaying got into trouble, I succeeded him as director. In April, 1966, the office of political secretaries was incorporated into the Central Secretariat; Tong Xiaopeng was director and I was deputy director.

The central office of political secretaries was also Mao Zedong's secretariat. Therefore, during my tenure, I had frequent contacts with people of Mao Zedong's first group. I was on familiar and good terms with Ye Zilong, Jiang Ying, Xu Yefu, Lin Ke, Wang Dongxing, Wang Jingxian, Li Yinqiao, Shen Tong, Wang Yuqing, Gao Zhi and Wu Xuejun. I never saw or heard anybody talk about any case of Mao Zedong philandering. Mao lived a simple life; the alleged "indulgence in promiscuous sex and decadence" were not true at all.

Great personalities have ordinary people's desires, too. I know that many great personalities have committed the misdeed of having extramarital affairs just as ordinary people. I do advocate that in private life one should conform to social norms. I do not believe that such problems are a matter of merely "being decadent." Therefore, if I did see or hear about such behavior on the part of Mao, I would certainly say so. But during my tenure there I really did not see or hear about such behavior on the part of Mao Zedong. I have no need to perjure myself for the sake

of Mao on this issue, because committing perjury before the court of history will not just hurt history but also Mao himself. Perjurers on matters of history are the same as falsifiers of history; they will not only lose their real-life moral integrity but will also be considered despicable by history.

Actually, with regard to matters of private life, Mao Zedong can be censured not for the numerous lies fabricated by Li Zhishui but for his marriage with He Zizhen on Jingangshan, because the marriage contract between Mao Zedong and Yang Kaihui still existed when Mao and He got married. To tell the truth, in the summer of 1966 I inquired of Zhou Enlai about this period in history. People on Jingangshan, Zhou Enlai replied, had then heard that Yang Kaihui had been executed by the Guomindang reactionaries, a situation similar to what happened to General Zhu De, and that the Central Committee issued explanations on those matters.

In the 1950s, Mao Zedong lived in three large south-facing rooms of Juxiang Study. The east and west rooms were each thirty-plus square meters in size and Mao Zedong and Jiang Qing each separately occupied one of the rooms. The middle room was less then twenty square meters in size and served as the duty office of the guards, secretaries, nurses, and attendants. In Mao Zedong's room, a large bed was placed in the middle, with books covering over half of the bed. Later, Mao Zedong often lived at the swimming pool. Similarly, in the room there, there was a bed, with half of the bed covered with books. None of these beds was spacious, even if just one person slept in it. How could several people share one

of these beds (as in Li's allegations of orgies on the part of Mao)? His fabrications are just too absurd!

Mao Zedong was the leader of people of the entire country, enjoying high prestige. He was very careful about maintaining his image. Li Zhishui admits this. Even an ordinary person would try to keep his extramarital affairs secret. Nevertheless, Mao Zedong who was very careful about maintaining his image allegedly discussed secrets and even illicit sexual practices with Li Zhishui. Could all this be true? Mao Zedong had so many subordinates and secretaries. Why did Mao Zedong not confess such secrets to anyone but Li Zhishui?

Mao Zedong's bedroom had no locks and was never locked. The duty office of the guards, secretaries, nurses and attendants was just outside the door. This duty office operated on a round-the-clock basis, with people in the office twenty-four hours a day; all activities were entered into records. As long as Mao Zedong was still up, every once in a while the guards, nurses and attendants would deliver documents, warm towels, tea, and medicine. People outside would know everything Mao Zedong did.

In such an environment, one may ask, how did Mao Zedong manage to "have sex with women by using sexual techniques?" And how was it possible to have "women be presented one after another like dishes?"

Shortly after the beginning of the Great Cultural Revolution, I was appointed as Mao Zedong's secretary. When Mao Zedong was out of town, I would remain in Zhongnanhai to take overall charge as acting director of the General Office of the CPC Central Committee. During this period I often

went to Mao Zedong's place, sometimes at night. How come I never saw the sexual games in Mao Zedong's place as depicted by Li Zhishui? On the contrary, what I did see was that Mao Zedong was especially respectful towards female comrades. For example, Mao Zedong was always very respectful to the nurse Wu Xuejun who was around him day and night. I worked in Zhongnanhai for a long time and was on familiar terms with those attendants in Zhongnanhai. There were in fact exceptionally beautiful girls among them. They were most willing to deliver water and warm towels to Mao Zedong. They often said to me: "The chairman is truly great, not only being politically great but also leading a simple life."

Mao Zedong was also very respectful toward them, sometimes asking them their names and inquiring about their families and making some encouraging remarks. Several of those girls would also clean my office and talk with me. They would complain to me if they had grievances. They would also complain to me sometimes when they had been sexually harassed. They complained to me about sexual harassment acts committed by several people. The most serious act was committed by a good friend of Li Zhishui's. But they never told me of any sexual harassment committed by Mao Zedong. Li Zhishui later came to know what his good friend had done, but in the book he accused Mao instead. One can attack one's enemy, but how can distorting facts be justified?

Li Zhishui's dirtiest fabrication is the claim that Mao Zedong and Jiang Qing reached a secret compromise, according to which Jiang Qing would permit Mao to have promiscuous sex with women

while Mao would allow Jiang Qing to take part in the Cultural Revolution. This is an act of killing two birds with one stone, attacking Mao Zedong as well as Jiang Qing at the same time. But if the Mao-Jiang compromise was secret, then how did Li Zhishui come to know about it? Could it be that he was a roundworm? Mao Zedong and Jiang Qing were not simply individual persons; everything about them was monitored by the party, the masses, and especially their numerous political enemies in China and abroad. It would not have been possible for them to reach such a compromise. **No one has ever discovered a case of Mao Zedong exchanging the party's principles for personal gains in the history of the revolution spanning several decades.**

Jiang Qing did commit various mistakes, but her shrewish character was something difficult to change. She was of the type of Nara and Qingwen, extremely jealous even of the long-deceased Yang Kaihui. How is it possible to imagine that she should have been capable of reaching some secret compromise with Mao Zedong on such matters?

In my view, describing Mao Zedong as an autocratic feudal emperor and considering the Cultural Revolution a "power struggle between Mao and Liu (Shaochi)" can only indicate the ignorance and vulgarity of Li Zhishui in terms of his political understanding. As a doctor who had studied abroad...he could not open his mouth even if he had had a countless number of what he believed to be "insights." Once he got the chance, however, his long-suppressed desire to vent himself suddenly exploded. He came to believe that he had become a political commentator overnight.

With a feeling of triumph, it became easy for him to develop an exaggerated sense of self-importance, resulting inevitably in exaggerations and distortions. Such is still understandable, I believe. What is intolerable is that, exploiting his status as Mao Zedong's health-maintenance doctor in the past, Li Zhishui presented fabricated details of Mao Zedong's private life to hoodwink the world. Such an act no longer indicates a normal psychological need, but that of a morally corrupt person.

Actually the pornographic stuff written by Li Zhishui is nothing but material plagiarized from pornographic tabloids sold by street vendors. The difference is that aside from the famous persons such as Jiang Qing, Zhang Yufeng and film stars, pornographic tabloids are unable to come up with many women's names. Li Zhishui did work in the "first group" for many years and knew the names of many female members of the confidential matters office and female attendants, and therefore he had much more capital than pornographic tabloids in terms of fabricating stories. He would boast, describing himself as an important figure around Mao Zedong and striking poses in his effort to con people into believing that all the lies fabricated by him were facts....

Lu: In his memoirs Li Zhishui mentions you seven or eight times. He says that you went to Shanghai to help Chen Boda and Jiang Qing draft the May 16 document in March, 1966, when you were newly appointed director of the secretariat of the General Office of the Central Committee and that you were

arrested in accordance with Mao Zedong's order in August, 1967, arguing that you were a "scapegoat."

Qi: I do not need to be defended by Li Zhishui. With enthusiasm for establishing a socialist utopia in China, I, on my own initiative and without hesitation, actively and self-conscientiously plunged myself into the Great Cultural Revolution led by Mao Zedong. Although that period lasted only a year and a half, I should be held responsible for everything in our work during that year and a half, and there was no "scapegoat" to speak of. There was an element of contingency in my personal fate in the Great Cultural Revolution, but the occurrence of the Great Cultural Revolution was inevitable under the historical conditions of that time; no one could have escaped that. You may stay in bed for the whole day tomorrow, but the sun will still rise. That cannot be helped. This unprecedentedly huge nation of ours can only get mature through a process of pain and suffering. History can only sigh deeply in this context!

However, Li Zhishui's recollections about me are also based on plagiarizing the so-called "non-fiction literature." In March, 1966, I was director of the history group of the *Red Flag* journal, and was not director of the secretariat of the General Office of the CPC Central Committee; I did not become the director until a couple of years later. I was still working at the Central Cultural Revolution Group in August, 1967, and had not yet been arrested... Li Zhishui lived in Zhongnanhai and supported me and Lin Ke in the "eight officials" case and had frequent contacts with us, so he can also be said to have been

my friend. How could he have indiscriminately engaged in plagiarism in this way?

Lu: In his memoir, Li Zhishui says that Mao Zedong treated him well; if so, then why would he have written such a memoir?

Qi: According to a friend who came home after visiting relatives abroad, originally Li Zhishui's memoir was different from what it is now, and was changed into its present shape because of the publisher's demands backed by an offer of a huge sum of money. If this is true, then this book was just a product of certain political objectives just as those anti-communist pamphlets created to meet political needs. Li Zhishui is nothing but a Judas who sold out his teacher for the sake of thirty silver dollars.

However, I cannot simply describing Li Zhishui as a despicable Judas, for he was never a true disciple. He was a descendent of court doctors of feudal emperors, and later became a self-employed professional trained under the tradition of Western liberal ideology. Communist ideology was totally alien to him. His return to China was a mistake in the course of his life. This decision went totally against his conception of life, value orientations, and world outlook. To be sure, such an analysis represents my judgment based on observing what he has done; Li Zhishui himself could not have such a clear understanding of himself. In terms of philosophical understanding, he is extremely shallow just as my medical knowledge is very shallow as compared with his. It is truly comical to present such a character as an "insider" and let him loudly whisper "private

secrets" behind people's ears in an affectedly mysterious manner.

It is not correct to say that Li Zhishui's memoir is without any truth. Some things he wrote were true, particularly with regard to events which he had personally experienced and which did not conflict with his writing objective. He gives fairly good, truthful accounts of those events. For instance, his accounts of Mao Zedong's attitude toward his own illnesses, the case of secretly placing listening-in devices around Mao Zedong, Mao Zedong's stubbornness in relation to swimming in the Yangtze River and in the sea as well as some of his descriptions of the character and style of Jiang Qing and Wang Dongxing are true not only in an overall sense but also in detail.

But as soon as accounts or analyses of a political nature are involved, he would change his direction; historical truth and his political orientation became mutually intolerant enemies. As long as there was a connection to politics, even things of daily life would also be distorted by him. For instance, he says that Mao Zedong attempted to discontinue health care for Liu Shaoqi as early as the 1960s, so as to let Liu Shaoqi die of illness; this fabrication is just too far-fetched!

Li Zhishui says that his memoirs are a "historical record" of the "suffering of ordinary people" of China. It is ironic that just as Li Zhishui's memoir is riding a high tide overseas, ordinary people of China are developing a "red-sun fever" independently. Hundreds of thousands of old workers, old peasants, and formerly rusticated young people are keeping Mao's memory alive and singing songs

extolling this man who died many years ago. The hundreds of millions of ordinary people who are considered by Li Zhishui to have suffered enormously under Mao Zedong are spontaneously developing a "red-sun fever" across China, without any organizational directives or actions directing public opinion. How does one explain this phenomenon?

In his preface, Li Zhishui is very proud of his lies of all kinds, but those lies no longer have freshness in the eyes of the Chinese people! In the preceding period all kinds of publications attacking Mao Zedong were in vogue for a time. Li Zhishui's book is very similar to *Jiang Qing's Confidential Secretary* by Lin Qingshan. There are not only similarities but also evidence of Li Zhisui plagiarizing the latter. The difference is that Lin Qingshan was never Mao Zedong's health-maintenance doctor and could not fabricate his "personal experiences"; thus he could only use alleged remarks by Qi Benyu and Yan Changgui to accuse Mao Zedong of being a feudal emperor. After reading the book, I became very angry and seriously complained to the People's Court of Beijing Municipality, but it refused to hear my complaint.

After being exposed by Qi Benyu and Yan Changgui, nobody believes Lin Qingshan's lies any more. But Li Zhishui is different, for he was Mao Zedong's health-maintenance doctor. Who could imagine that he was the same as the liar Lin Qingshan!

Li Zhishui does not just attack Mao Zedong... According to him, Zhou Enlai, who is revered by the Chinese people, was also Mao Zedong's "slave" and "loyal dog," making Li Zhisui "deeply disgusted"; he

even "saw" with his own eyes Zhou Enlai kneeling down in front of Mao Zedong to report on his work. How incredible! For dozens of times I saw Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai discussing affairs of the state; how come I never saw a scene like that even once. Why is it that all these astounding incidents were seen by only one person, Li Zhishui? Deng Yingchao (Madame Zhou Enlai) was a "loach-like person" and "extremely selfish," also making Li Zhisui "deeply disgusted." There is no need to even talk about others; people from top to bottom were completely corrupt according to Li Zhisui... Is he just attacking Mao?